Alberta's Constitutional Reform Task Force

Roundtable III
November 23, 1990

"Restructuring Federalism"

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MR. HORSMAN: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I think I'll call the meeting to order. We're still waiting for a couple of participants, both on the panel and as one of our presenters, but in view of the time, I think we'll start our proceedings this morning.

First of all, I will introduce the people seated at the table. My name is Jim Horsman, and I'm the Minister of Federal Intergovernmental Affairs and Chairman of this Constitutional Reform Task Force which has been established by our government, and this is the third Task Force roundtable discussion on Alberta's position as we develop it with respect to constitutional reform in Canada.

I'll introduce the table. Starting on my far right, Gary Severtson is the MLA for Innisfail. Next to him is the Honourable Dennis Anderson, the MLA for Calgary Currie and the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Next to him is Fernand Landry from New Brunswick, former deputy to the Premier of New Brunswick, who is just now moving into another field of endeavor, and we're pleased to have him here with us this morning.

On my immediate right is Stan Schumacher, the MLA for Drumheller and the Vice-Chairman of the committee. On my immediate left is Dr. David Bercuson, Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of Calgary. Next to him is Lise Bissonnette, the publisher of Le Devoir, an influential, I'm told, Montreal daily. And next is Jack Ady, a member of the Legislative Assembly for Cardston, and seated next to him is Fred Bradley, the MLA for Pincher Creek - Crowsnest, and then Stockwell Day is the MLA for Red Deer North.

We are expecting two other arrivals. The Honourable Ken Rostad, the Attorney General, MLA for Camrose, has not yet made it, but we expect him, and we will be joined we hope as well by Ted

Byfield, the publisher of the British Columbia Report.

I'd just like to indicate that these proceedings are being televised and will be rebroadcast via cable television throughout Alberta. For those who are going to follow the proceedings on cable, those who wish to contact our Task Force in any way to obtain copies of the proceedings, or to give us their views by correspondence, may do so by writing to any member of the Task Force at the Legislative Assembly in Edmonton. That's the only address you really need to contact us, but we have, of course, published a pamphlet which gives you more specifics than that. But it's very easy to contact us.

I had a letter from somebody who had watched the whole proceeding on cable and said that they had a hard time getting an address for us, but it's very easy to do. Just write to me or any other member of the panel at the Legislative Assembly in Edmonton.

I'll just take a moment or two to explain the proceedings. This is the third roundtable. The first took place in Edmonton. At that time we were pleased to have Dr. Ron Watts who is the head of the Institute for Constitutional Law at Queen's University and Dr. Peter Meekison from the University of Alberta, Vice-President (Academic) University of Alberta.

And here in Calgary we had, on November the 2nd, the second roundtable where we talked about the dynamics of federalism. At that time, we had presenters who were discussing various aspects of the Constitution. Andrew Bear Robe from the Siksika Nation of the Blackfoot Confederacy discussed aboriginal rights. Dr. Anne McLellan from the University of Alberta discussed the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and we had David Elton from the Canada West Foundation, and we discussed constitutional reform including a fairly interesting discussion, I think it's fair to say, on senate reform.

We have four presenters this morning, and what we will do is ask each of them to take 15 minutes. Then we will engage in a roundtable discussion with members of the panel. We will have a brief break during the course of the morning, and then we will come back to a further roundtable discussion, and then we will have questions from the floor. I would ask you to present your questions in a written form, and cards should be provided to you for your questions.

I would ask that if you submit questions to any of the participants or to the panel that you do so and give it in writing and give us your name and address, and that will permit us to respond to your questions in more detail if it's not possible to do so verbally during the course of the morning.

Those who wish to obtain copies of the transcripts, I'd ask that you give us your names and addresses. There are two places, just as you enter and on the table just over on my left and on your right you will find a registration sheet which you can sign up for receipt of all the transcripts of the proceedings as we go through this process.

There will be one further panel discussion, and that will take place November the 30th, next week, at Room 512 in the Alberta Legislature in Edmonton. At that time -- that will be in the afternoon after the Legislature session, which goes from ten in the morning till one o'clock in the afternoon -- the panel will reconvene.

At that time, we will have speakers on the constitutional amendment process: Professor Stephen A. Scott from the University of McGill; Professor Allan Tupper from the University of Alberta. We will also have a discussion on the economics of federalism, Professor Robert Mansell from the University of Calgary, and Professor Paul Boothe from the University of Alberta. And that will conclude the roundtable discussions.

Following that, the panel will gather our thoughts together and bring forward the discussion paper for Albertans to consider. We will circulate that widely throughout Alberta, and we will also formulate a questionnaire in which we will seek the views of, we hope, every household in the province in order for Albertans to give us their views in a general way as to the future of Canada and federalism.

That will be followed by the preparation of a position paper, and that position paper will then be tabled in our Legislative Assembly and be the subject of a debate by all parties in the Legislature. I expect that the Legislature will form itself into a Public Affairs Committee which consists of all members of the Assembly, and further public hearings will be held.

I should point out that before we prepare a position paper, there will be extensive public hearings throughout Alberta, not

just in Edmonton and Calgary, but indeed in as many centers as is possible, and we will be seeking the views in those public forums as well.

It's not our intention to take a fixed position at this stage. We are indeed seeking the views of Albertans, and we will try to reflect those as we present a position paper for the people of Alberta to consider.

So with that, I'd like to welcome Ted Byfield, who I see has just arrived, and ask him to join us at the table. I think you are proposed to be seated here, Ted.

MR. BYFIELD: Glad to see all you fellows are early.

MR. HORSMAN: Those are my introductory remarks. I just want to emphasize, before we ask our first presenter to make some comments, that we are very seriously into a consideration of the future of Canada, and various methods of seeking the views of Canadians have been established.

The Quebec Government has established a large group, and they are now holding hearings, and quite extensive publicity is being given to their hearings.

The Federal Government has embarked upon a different approach with the establishment of a citizens forum chaired by Keith Spicer, and they will be using their own technique to gather the views of Canadians.

The Government of New Brunswick, and perhaps we'll hear more about that from Mr. Landry this morning, has embarked upon a process as well.

Other governments are considering doing so, and so slightly different approaches are being taken, but in the end, we will have to bring our views together as Canadians in an appropriate method to determine what the future of this country will be.

So Roundtable III, Restructuring Federalism, to give us their perspective, I would introduce Dr. David Bercuson who, as I mentioned earlier, is the Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of Calgary and who has written extensively on the Canadian Constitution and who, I know, has quite strong views.

Dr. Bercuson?

DR. BERCUSON: Thank you, very much, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the committee for the opportunity of presenting my views. I have to say for the record, of course, that my views are my own and don't in any way represent those of the university.

When I was invited here, I tried to find out precisely what it was I was supposed to be speaking about, and I was told, "Well, just sort of present your views on what you think is likely to happen in the near future constitutionally."

It always mystifies me as to why it is historians are being asked what is going to happen in the future when we're alleged to be experts on what has happened in the past, so I'm going to say a few words about what I think ought to happen. In other words, the way I think this process should go and then a few words about what I think will happen, and I begin my remarks by warning you about what I call "Bercuson's Iron Law of History".

Bercuson's Iron Law of History is that things hardly ever change very much except when they do, and when they do, they change quite a bit very quickly, and the change is almost never predictable, and anyone who tries to predict those changes is a fool, so having said that, I'll present you with my views.

I would hope that this government would support the position that the current Constitution has served Canada well and that there ought not to be any radical or far-reaching changes to the current Constitution; that there ought not to be any radical restructuring of the Canadian constitutional or political system with one exception, and the exception is that I, too, support the concept of a Triple E Senate although I know that I support it by throwing it in the teeth of reality because I think the reality is that it will not be accepted, and it will not be implemented. But nonetheless, I think it's an important principle for us all to continue to support and I know you, Mr. Chairman, have supported that principle very strongly in the past so I do as well.

I think the current Constitution has served Canada well, and I think that the evidence of that is all around us. This is a country which is an economically advanced, technologically advanced, industrially advanced society. It is a free society. It is a society which attracts hundreds of thousands of immigrants from all over the world every year who come here to

live in freedom and to partake of the opportunity that we have to offer.

It is a society which has taken care to a great degree, to a great extent, of its poor and of its disadvantaged. It is a society with caring and with feeling. It is a society with heart, with a basic social system, social welfare system or social safety net, that most Canadians will support, although, of course, there will always be arguments as to the degree of the applicability of this policy or that policy.

But I think what we've built here is we've built an advanced, free, humane society. We've done it in the teeth of tremendous adversity. Anyone who walks outside today or tomorrow will know, for example, that what we have done here in Western Canada, we have done in the face of tremendous disadvantages of geography and climate and distance that we have had to overcome and which in other parts of the world have been overcome only through the imposition of dictatorship, but we have done it while we have preserved our freedom and we have preserved our diversity.

I don't see anything wrong with the existing Constitution except for the fact that I believe that the West and, in fact, all of the under-populated parts of this country are not adequately represented in the federal system the way they ought to be and in the way a true federal system should be structured. But I'm not going to get into that. You had that debate before.

I also think that this Constitution meets the needs of Quebecers. I'm not a Quebecer, and Ms. Bissonnette, I'm sure, will give you a radically different view than my own. But I was in Montreal last weekend again, and once again when I arrived in Montreal, arrived in Quebec, I see a flourishing, advanced, free society.

I see the Francophone community, which started off as a bare handful of several tens of thousands on the shores of the St. Lawrence 300 years ago, is today a modern, advanced, free, industrially advanced, technologically advanced society. The process of epanouissement, the flourishing of Quebec society, has been going on since before the quiet revolution of 1960 and after, and it continues to go on today and will continue to go on in the future because of the dynamism of the people of Quebec and because the people of Quebec believe in themselves.

But what I think has happened is that there has been a drive on the part of political leaders in Quebec and also on the part of

certain establishment leaders in Quebec, as there has been in every part of this country, to expand the powers of the Provincial Government. Quebec has been doing this as long as Ontario has. Ontario has been doing it longer than Quebec, in fact, and there were times in Canadian history when the Government of Ontario was the leader of the drive to strip the Federal Government of its powers and to bring more powers to the provincial governments.

It's not too long ago we remember premiers like Mitchell Hepburn and Leslie Frost. and so on who led this drive to take power away from the Federal Government, so Quebec hasn't, by all means, always been the leader of that situation.

But what has occurred over the last 30 years is that there has come to take hold, in certain quarters in Quebec, the idea, fixation, that the only way that Quebec can solve its problem -- and the problem is always going to be there for Quebec because it is a small part of the larger North American milieu -- to solve its demographic problem, it needs more powers, more powers, more powers and, of course, there are many people in Quebec who believe that what Quebec ultimately needs is independence.

We cannot solve that problem for Quebec. Quebec has to decide for themselves what their future is going to be in terms of the solution to that terrible demographic dilemma which they face, and I do not believe that we should be twisting the rest of this country out of shape in order to accommodate the special needs of Quebec, and it's the reason why I opposed the Meech Lake Accord. It's the reason why I am glad that the Meech Lake Accord is no longer a fact of Canadian political life.

I think that what we must do is we must resist special status for any province. We must do so, however, in the full knowledge that Quebecers do not see Quebec as a province like the others and indeed it is not a province like the others. The Government of Quebec is nothing less than the government of the nation state of the Francophone community of Quebec. That is what the Government of Quebec is. It is the way it has seen itself since Confederation.

Confederation was sold to Quebecers, and there was opposition in Quebec to Confederation, but it was sold to Quebecers with the idea that they would get a government of their own which would help them to determine their own destiny.

They have always believed that they needed a government of their own, and I think it's clear that they do need a government of their own in that sense, but at one time they believed that the powers of a Provincial Government were sufficient for what their purposes were. Many of them, most of them, don't believe that any longer. Well, they don't believe it. They've changed their views as a result of a variety of circumstances.

I'm not a Quebecer, and I can't help that, but the way I have to respond as a Canadian from hors du Quebec, the rest of Canada, the way I have to respond as a Canadian from outside of Quebec is, I don't want to see radical changes to my country's structure because I think my country is working very well as it is.

And what I'm trying to say is that I think that if we are faced, as Canadians, with the choice of accommodating a radical shift in the nature of Confederation or having Quebec leave Confederation, then it is better to have Quebec leave Confederation and keep the rest of the country intact building the same sort of a society that we have today, unfortunately without Quebec.

I think it would be a great tragedy if Quebec left, but I think it would be a greater tragedy if all of Canada was twisted out of shape and broken up in order to accommodate those special requirements of Quebec. I don't know how I can make it any clearer than that.

We have, for example, a situation where we have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It seems to me that that Charter of Rights and Freedoms is either predominant over all other legislation; it either takes dominance over all of the Constitution and all other legislation; it is either the most important document in the Canadian political and governmental system; or it isn't. You can't have it both ways.

I would like to see the notwithstanding clause removed from the Constitution, and I hope this committee will recommend that the notwithstanding clause be removed from the Constitution. Because you can't have rights which are conditional. Either the citizens of Canada have rights under a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, or they don't. There is no halfway. And as the rights of certain citizens are abridged, the rights of all citizens are abridged.

I don't want to quote American political leaders to you, but I think Abraham Lincoln was absolutely right when he said that a

house divided against itself cannot stand, and if certain members of that house have certain rights and certain other members of that house have other rights, then you have that kind of a situation occurring.

If you agree to a condition of special status for Quebec, given the current political and constitutional thinking of this country, which is that all provinces are equal, and by the way, I have to tell you historically and constitutionally, that is not true. All provinces are not equal. They were not created equal at Confederation. This is not the American political system in which the states are constitutionally mandated to be equal. That is not the case in Canada. There have always been special conditions of one kind or another within the Canadian political system, but they haven't been radical deviations from the mean. So I'm not contradicting myself when I say that.

What I am saying is, that given the current situation, if a special status was given to Quebec in which Quebec was to get considerably greater powers than any of the other provinces, a dynamic would be set up in which all of the provinces would be seeking those greater powers, and the end result of that will be the total destruction of this country, the total dissolution of the ties that bind Canadians together. And that's why I don't want to see that happen either.

Now, what I think is going to happen is that I think that the Belanger-Campeau Commission in Quebec and the Liberal Party Commission, which was commissioned by Premier Bourassa, will in the end recommend some form of what is now being referred to as "asymmetrical federalism". This is a guess. And Ms. Bissonnette can shoot me right out of the sky in five minutes and maybe she will, but I think that's what they're going to recommend.

And the reason I think they're going to recommend that is because although there is a lot of strong independentist feeling in Quebec, the fact of the reality of the matter is that you don't build a country that easily. You don't put in place that easily a Ministry of Fisheries, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a Quebec Transportation Safety Board, a Quebec Communications Commission, and so on. It takes time to build a country. It takes time to build the requisite bureauracy. It takes time to negotiate issues such as the national debt and free trade with your new partners Canada and the United States and so on and so forth. So it isn't all that easy.

There's no doubt in my mind that there is some strong feeling for independence in various areas of Quebec. I don't think that's, you know, manipulated feeling. I think it's there. I think it's real. But I think that Belanger-Campeau was set up in such a way by the Premier of Quebec to come up with answers which are very close to those which he would like to see, and I think he recognizes that independence isn't something that is done that easily or that quickly. So I think what we're going to see is some form of asymmetrical federalism.

What are the powers that Quebec is likely to seek under an emerging Meech II scenario? Well, I think certainly you can include all of the powers that were there under Meech, but then probably they will seek powers over communications in Quebec, powers over the environment in Quebec, possibly special regulatory powers over provincial banking institutions, possibly special powers to engage in external relations without the need for the Federal Government to have a presence, and possibly total authority to negotiate agreements with the native people in the province. That's just a guess, and I make it on the basis of various things that I see happening at the moment such as the whole James Bay environmental mess that we see developing there.

I think that is what Belanger-Campeau is likely to recommend, backed up with probably a referendum and a continuation of some of the things that the Premier of Quebec has been saying which is basically, "Take us seriously, or we may have to resort to some sort of unilateral action down the road." In other words, "Well, you know, we're not fooling about this. This is it. It's Belanger-Campeau, or it's total independence. Take your pick."

At the same time, I think the Spicer Commission, which has not been set up as a commission of constitutional experts, and deliberately so, because what it has been set up for is to take the pulse of Canadians, and it will take the pulse of Canadians, and it will inevitably find that most Canadians want to keep the country together, and most Canadians want to maintain a connection with Quebec, and they may even find that many Quebecers want to maintain connections with Canada. But I don't think Spicer is going to be specific about any kind of constitutional recommendation. It's just going to say to the Government of Canada and to the other nine provinces of Canada, "Well, the people of Canada clearly want to see Canada together."

And that's going to be taken, I think, as a mandate on the part of the Prime Minister to attempt to negotiate a second kind of a Meech Lake Accord.

I think at the same time, people like myself are going to be labeled as extremists because what we are saying is that we like the status quo. That we reject the idea that moderation means that you have to be moderate in terms of meeting the demands of the other party.

In democracies, we're all set up for compromise. That's the essence of democracy. And we're taught that compromise is a good thing, and if you're unwilling to compromise, then you're a bad person, or you're taking a bad position. That's what we're taught in a democratic system. So people like myself who are basically saying, "Look, I like the Constitution the way it is and basically it's got to be take it or leave it," we're going to be labeled as extremists as are the Pequistes on the other side.

So the scenario is going to be established for the Prime Minister next fall perhaps -- and I think this is what's going to happen -- on the basis of Belanger-Campeau and on the basis of Spicer to launch a second Meech process. And I know that the Premier of Quebec has said that he won't enter into any such agreements again, but I think the feeling in some quarters of Quebec is that he has painted himself into a corner by doing that, that he'll find a way out of the corner especially if the Prime Minister wants to negotiate something on the basis of Belanger-Campeau recommendations. After all, Belanger-Campeau is Bourassa's own commission. And what will come out of that, I think, is going to be Meech II.

What will happen as a result of that, I don't know. I invoke, again, Bercuson's Iron Law of History. I'm out far enough on a limb already. I'm sure that members at this table are going to take great relish in sawing that limb off, but nonetheless, I thought, what the heck, you've invited me here, and I'm going to tell you exactly the way I see it, so my time is up, and thank you very much.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, thank you very much, Dr. Bercuson. We wanted to have some provocative discussion. I'm sure we're going to engage in that as you say.

Our next presenter this morning is a distinguished Canadian, a New Brunswicker, Fernand Landry, who until just very recently was Deputy Minister of the Premier's Office in the Province of New

Brunswick. I'd like to point out that his wife Aldrea is the Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs and therefore my compatriot in the Province of New Brunswick.

They've been very active. He and his wife have been active participants in the formation of constitutional policy in the McKenna government, and he's now left that office, and I don't know entirely, exactly, what he's going to do in the future, but I understand it may have something to do with politics in New Brunswick.

I'd like to welcome you here to our Province of Alberta and ask you to present what we have called an "Atlantic Perspective", and I know he can't presume necessarily to speak on behalf of all the Atlantic Provinces, four Eastern Provinces of Canada, but we wanted to make sure that we did hear from a distinguished Canadian from that region of our country; and therefore, I'd ask Fernand to make his presentation. Thank you very much for coming from New Brunswick.

MR. LANDRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much for inviting me here. I'm honoured and privileged to be in Western Canada to speak with you and to speak with your committee and to share with distinguished guests from Quebec and from this region this opportunity to discuss the future of our country.

I must say as well that the views that I'm going to express are going to be my personal views. They are not my premier's views or my wife's views at all. They may share some of those, some of my views, but I'm speaking here personally.

I must say at the outset as well that I spoke with Professor Bercuson when we first came in, and I thought that I could share some of his views, but after having heard him, I have some hesitancy to say that I share most of his views.

Let me at the outset say that your invitation did cause me some anxiety. I was asked to speak as a New Brunswicker, as a Maritimer, as an Atlantic Canadian, and probably as an Acadian as well, and to use those perspectives as a means on commenting on Canada's future.

My background, as anybody's background, obviously colors my views on Canada, however, I believe that speaking from a wider perspective would be more helpful to you in your task of developing a

new, broad vision for this country.

It concerns me very deeply that Canadians who are closely involved in this debate over the country's future are allowing parochialism to color their perspective. And I must say that all of us who are involved in provincial politics have done that too much, and I share personally some of the blame for that.

I think if we continue to rely on our own narrow experiences to cling to our favoured themes and to be wary of others who do not share our frame of reference, then I believe the prospects for Canada are not very encouraging. And if it wasn't unfair, I would address the question of the Triple E Senate that Professor Bercuson has talked about. He says, "I want no radical change, but I want a Triple E Senate." You know, is that consistent? Anyway, we'll talk about that later.

For the sake of our country, we must set aside parochial views, and we must focus our vision of Canada on the best interests of all our fellow Canadians and citizens in all regions of the country.

Consequently, Mr. Chairman, I'll try today to transcend a bit my personal, regional, and cultural perspectives with which I am more familiar and, of course, more comfortable. I would be more comfortable speaking to you as a Canadian and as a New Brunswicker than try to speak to you or pretend to speak to you as simply a Canadian.

Canadian leaders from all walks of life, but particularly from the political life, must make it very clear to Canadians that they are earnestly trying to understand the many voices that are speaking in this country, and I think it's a responsibility on politicians from across the country to tell Newfoundlanders that they understand or to try to understand Newfoundlanders and to tell them that they understand their perspective as well.

The same applies to Newfoundlanders and Newfoundland politicians. They must convey to Quebecers and Canadians -- not "They, the Quebecers" and "We, the Canadians", but "They, the Quebecers as Canadians" -- that they understand their needs and their perspectives. I must try to understand why it is that the West wants a Triple E Senate, and I think I do because I share that vision or that need of Western Canada to be more effectively represented in the national government.

I think it's crucial, if trust is to be restored in our

political leaders and in our national institutions, that politicians do show that they understand or are trying to understand what it is that Canadians from all regions of this country want for the country.

Canadians will not begin to listen to each other unless they first believe that they have been heard by their leaders, and in that sense, I would congratulate this committee, Mr. Chairman, for reaching out to hear the views of all of us here today and to hear the views of people from Alberta on what their vision of the country is.

It will take a sustained effort, in the wake of Meech Lake and in the wake of "the circus" that occurred in Ottawa back in June, it will take a sustained effort by our political leaders to begin the process of rebuilding confidence and hope in this country.

In order to find substantive solutions, it is critical to address the question of process. I believe, as do many others, that this is a central lesson that we learned from the Meech Lake experience. However, it is much more than simply making provision for public to write briefs for commissions or task forces after which decisions and choices are announced by government.

The process of building a new vision for the country should start with trying to repair the bruised relationships that threaten the very fabric of our nation.

The established order of things is changing. For example, there has been tremendous growth and change in many provinces and regions in this country, perhaps none as great as in Quebec and as in the West. And that's perhaps why the voices that we hear from the West and from Quebec are the strongest voices. They are the voices of people who have evolved and evolved a whole lot in the last 30, 40 years.

Western Canada has evolved perhaps more and progressed perhaps more than any other part of the country. Quebec has progressed tremendously in the last 20 years. And, of course, we're a little bit closer to Quebec and I perhaps am a little bit closer to Quebec. I was born just across the border from Quebec, and I share the same language as Quebecers, but I've observed over the last 25 years what has happened in Quebec.

You know, the economy has become so important to Quebecers. Well, you know, back in the '50s, perhaps we heard about language and culture more than we heard about the economy. Now we hear

about the economy in Quebec, and we hear about the new sense of entrepreneurship in Quebec and the new opening to the world in Quebec that is phenomenal.

And Western Canada did the same thing. You people are open to the world. You're not afraid of dealing with the United States or dealing with Japan. Anyway, I don't want to go on with that, but changes have occurred, and those changes perhaps have been more profound here and in Quebec than anywhere else in the country.

These changes, of course, have been nourished and accelerated by global forces of economy, politics, communications in culture, and no province or region is immune to these changes.

I'm not still convinced that we fully understand or that anybody really fully understands what has happened to this country, nor do we fully understand the economic, demographic, and other currents that are shaping our future. Therefore, I think one lesson that we must learn is to resist the temptation to seek hasty solutions. I suppose practical people here will tell me, "We may not have a choice; we may have to be hasty" because of what's happening in Quebec, but I think we have to reflect deeply and take the time that is required for that.

My hope is that we take the time we need to build a consensus for solid reconstruction and that we avoid patchwork solutions. I mean, Meech Lake, to a certain extent, was a patchwork solution. It wasn't a look at what this country wanted. We wanted to do Meech Lake and then promise to deal with Triple E Senate afterwards. We wanted to do Meech Lake and promise to deal with all kinds of other things afterwards. But I don't think you can make any change which is profound and radical in our Constitution and do it only in one sector.

I mean, can you address Triple E Senate, for example, without looking at the powers that a new elected senate would have, and can you look at the powers of a new elected senate without looking at the powers of the House of Commons? Can you do that? Can you do that without looking at the powers of the senate and what powers they would have in light of provincial powers, for example? Is it possible to make one radical change on one aspect of the Constitution without touching the others? Well, perhaps Meech Lake showed us that it's not possible to do that.

So my plea is that collectively we try to diagnose

the illness which is gripping Canada rather than just try treating the symptoms. We need to ask and answer questions that probe what has gone wrong with our value system, with our institutions, and with our political processes.

For instance, we blame politicians, and it's easy to blame politicians for the state the country is in. But, you know, should we blame them, and are they really responsible for most of the blame, or are we ordinary Canadians as much to blame because we've not been looking at the needs of other Canadians.

When we say, for example, that our neighbours or another province or region has made disproportionate gains or has not, to use the expression, "paid its way", what evidence do we really have of that? And what does this concern about people paying their way in one part of the country or the other say about our values and relationships in this country? What are the basic propositions on which this country should rest? Do we share the consensus on that?

In short, I think there's a lot of soul-searching to be done. We need to think hard about the consequences for all of us if Canada is fragmented into two or more pieces. No Canadian should mistakenly believe that the path to any one of our possible futures can be travelled without cost and sacrifice.

It is one thing to seek change because of an inspiring vision of how things might be different. It is a different thing and quite another thing to seek change because we simply are not happy with the status quo.

We must come back, I think, to traditional Canadian values: Values that have helped this country to prosper and to become the envy of the world. The West was populated by people who wanted to come to this country because they knew that they would have a better life here than where they were before. And those people, all of you people, have contributed enormously to what this country is. All Canadians, I think, must inject into this debate a spirit of accommodation and generosity if we are to resolve our current differences.

And this brings me to my next point. There is a distressing lack of appreciation, and on that I agree with Dr. Bercuson, among Canadians of what we've accomplished in this country and how incredibly well off Canadians are on virtually every measure in relation to the vast majority of

the world's population.

And I have in mind not just our standards of health care, education, and wealth distribution but also our personal freedoms and, with an exception for the Senate actions last night, the comparative civility of our political process and our unparalleled natural environment. It is far from clear that Canadians generally appreciate the enormity of our achievements and of our advantages.

I think we need to ask ourselves if these standards can be maintained in the event that we cannot find a modus vivendi, a new, more comfortable living arrangement, in this country.

The Canadian experiment is a test of our ability to manage the challenges that we have in common: challenges such as economic development, social security for all our citizens, public security, protection of the environment, and the provision of equal opportunity for all people to achieve their potential.

We strive for these things in spite of our diversity. In fact, we strive for them because of our diversity. Historically, Canadians have always been convinced that our well-being together is greater than our well-being apart. For different reasons, many Canadians have now reached the conclusion that this is no longer true.

Without wanting to bias the question, I ask you what the prospects are for any part of this country on its own in a current world community where strength appears to come from integration and not from fragmentation.

The challenge is to find out why so many Canadians think we would be better off living apart. This is an important task for those such a few as you members of this committee who seek to define the Canada of tomorrow.

I believe that the Meech Lake debate has shed some light on the question. Many Canadians thought their needs were being overlooked in the Meech Lake Accord. They were simply not prepared to trust that subsequent rounds of constitutional reform would properly address their needs, and they mistrusted the argument that the historical grievances of Quebec had to be addressed before any changes could be made. Many people profoundly objected to the process that was used to amend the Constitution, and many people profoundly objected to the idea that any part of the country

should have a special status.

So here we are, task forces, commissions, and citizen forums, all engaging Canadians in debate on what we do next. For my part, I think the debate has seriously escalated and time for empty rhetoric has run its course. We can no longer afford to posture and bargain and take positions that are positions of simply bargaining and posturing.

What is happening in Quebec is very profound, and I'm not one of those who subscribe -- and on that I agree with Professor Bercuson as well -- who subscribe that we should submit ourselves to blackmail, but I think we have to sit down and talk rationally about the future of the country with all of its constituent elements. I think we will have a substantially reconstructed country, or we will have none at all.

The only way out of our constitutional gridlock is to open a renewal process that will invoke consensus-building and that will not be controlled exclusively by politicians. In rebuilding our country, we should all be prepared to consider arrangements that, seen from a pre-Meech perspective, would be considered heresy.

I think Canada has reached the end of its exploring to a certain extent and is again face-to-face with the question of whether we can achieve more collectively than individually. The question was answered affirmatively in 1867. Whether this question will be answered in the same way in the 1990's remains to be seen. I think part of the judgment will turn, as it did in 1867, on the determination of how much provincial/regional diversity we want to preserve and still have an effective national government.

But even more complicated than the trade-offs that were made in 1867 is the need to recognize greater diversity between the provinces and the need to confer different responsibilities or perhaps different degrees of responsibilities on different provinces or regions.

We need to get beyond the dogma of the equality of provinces. It is not true that the provinces in this country are equal. Ontario is not equal with P.E.I., and anybody who says that Ontario and P.E.I. are equal is blind. In the national government, for God's sake, Ontario has tons of people in Parliament; P.E.I. has four. So I think we could try to achieve a greater degree of equality between provinces, but I think to say that we will have total equality or have had total equality between provinces is false.

The final point that I want to make concerns the

need to recognize the transitional state in which Canada finds itself. The past is gone. The present is confusing, and the future is uncertain. How we behave in such a period will say a lot about our national character.

History gives us only a few opportunities to act on a scale that can significantly change the lives of many for generations. This is such a time, and we cannot shirk our responsibilities. What we do, does matter. What your committee does, Mr. Chairman, does matter. Whether we want to admit it or not, the country is in disarray, and the coming months will further test our national character and our basic values as Canadians.

In these remarks I've posed the question of whether the parts of Canada can accomplish more in a united or a divided state. I've said that this question is crucial to the future of the country. The question begs another: Namely, what exactly are we trying to achieve by division or unity? I suspect that there's a great deal more clarity in some parts of the country than in others and in some groups in this country than for others.

But it would be a real tragedy if the country finally succumbed because we weren't clear on what we stood for, and I don't think the answer is that we stand for constitutional recognition of a Distinct Society or a Triple E Senate or for that matter the entrenchment of New Brunswick's Bill 88 in the Constitution. They are simply a means to an end.

We now need a truly national dialogue to probe the vision that lies behind the rhetoric, a dialogue that accommodates as far as possible elements of the many conflicting visions of Canada.

The Spicer Commission may help in this regard as may the other commissions and task forces that are underway in Canada. There is not one right way of stitching the country together, but I have a sense that there must be an even greater and more constructive dialogue.

Meech Lake featured too much of "What I want" and "What you can't have" or "What you can't have unless I get what I want". I hope that we're not only sadder but a little wiser after Meech. It was not our finest hour.

The message I want to bring to you today is that we must be more open than we have ever been to innovative and perhaps even radical solutions for redefining the country. Some processes are now in place, and others will no doubt follow. All of them should go back to the basics. Why is it that we exist as a country and what we hope to achieve collectively.

This is an enormous challenge, and I feel a strong sense of privilege to be here today playing a small role in the search for a new order and a new identity, a new Canada that we can all enthusiastically embrace.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HORSMAN: Thank you.

I'd like to welcome the Attorney General of Alberta, Ken Rostad, from Camrose who has been able to join us and in introducing our next participant, I want to say that we're pleased to have a female presence at the table. Our two female members of our Task Force unfortunately are unable to join us today. Nancy Betkowski, who is the MLA for Edmonton Glenora and the Minister of Health, is addressing a conference of health units in Lethbridge and unable to be here, and Pearl Calahasen, who is the MLA for Lesser Slave Lake, is attending a conference on northern development in the north.

So we're pleased indeed to welcome Ms. Bissonnette who I mentioned is the publisher of the influential French language Montreal daily "Le Devoir". She is an insightful observer of Quebec politics, and we're looking forward to her presentation to us on the Quebec perspective, and we look forward to not only hearing her initial comments but participating with her in the roundtable discussion when we have concluded our initial presentations.

Bienvenue a la province de l'Alberta.

MS. BISSONNETTE: Merci beaucoup, Monsieur le President.

I'm always willing to accept an invitation to come West. I come from the northwest of Quebec, and there's a sense of place here. I could explain it with difficulty. I think Mr. Byfield might understand what I'm saying, but there's a sense of place here that is very near to my own experience, so I'm always really pleased to be here and I'll tell you a little incident that you will understand why on top of that.

It was roughly a year ago that I came here to give a speech at the University of Calgary. It was the Chancellor's Club, and at the time the business of Meech was really flourishing, and I was among the few who were squarely predicting that Meech would fail. I couldn't be very precise

at the time about the future formulas for Quebec or for Canada except to say, and I said it quite clearly at the time, that if Meech were to fail, the only option that would be absolutely precluded would be a reenforcement of the federal link in this country and so would be the status quo.

Only weeks later, and I think even days, I delivered roughly the same speech to the Canadian Club in Toronto, and I insisted that I did not understand our strong federalists, and there were quite a few in the audience in Toronto -- I mean, you know, people from the Liberal Party and the NDP -- and I did not quite understand why they would go against Meech, and they were quite strong opponents of Meech, and still believe that Canada would enjoy a strong central government.

The truth is, and I say that today with confidence, that my Calgary public immediately understood what I was talking about, and the Toronto public chose instead to challenge me and to say that as soon as Mr. Chretien would be elected as leader of the Liberal Party, he would be able to turn the situation around in Quebec and things would sort of calm down.

So I'm not saying that we journalists always predict right, but I think that, you know, I was right, and the people in Calgary who understood what I was saying were right also. I'm not being flattering here, but I think that Calgary is an intelligent place to be, and that's why I accepted the invitation, but I didn't come in a fighting mood.

In fact, I was surprised by Mr. Bercuson's presentation because I came also to hear about what's going on here in the West. We're, in Quebec right now, caught up in the process of discussing again the future of the province. There's not much talk about what's going on in the rest of the country right now, and I thought that also I could well feed on our discussions today for my own thinking in Quebec.

I won't dwell too long on the Meech failure. I think it isn't worth it anymore except to say that I'm not one to go for a witch hunt against some individuals, be they Mrs. Carstairs, Mr. Wells, or Mr. Harper. I think that much of the press indulged too much in that. In the end, why do political deals fail? It's not because of persons, but they fail because they have to. Conflicting visions of Canada were clashing through the Meech Lake Accord, and they were, in my view, impossible to reconcile, and they were both absolutely legitimate.

I've always said in all my editorials that I

understood perfectly why people opposed the Meech Lake Accord and why people in Quebec wanted it, and in both cases, one was not, you know, more of a culprit than the other. It is possible that legitimate views are contrary, and so if you can't reconcile them, you just don't. You know, you just stop trying, at least to this kind of accord.

Should Meech have been signed, I'm totally convinced that the clash would have manifested itself nevertheless in the future. Maybe we would have had a period of calm, and I have no doubt about that, but ten years from now, the same problems would have come up again. Meech failed, then, and this is it. And I will repeat here a few cliches that some of my friends and colleagues very often from the English-speaking press in Canada are still challenging.

First, and I'm totally convinced of that, that Quebec will not go back to the negotiating table, at least the negotiating table as we know it, and will not abide by the present constitutional rules whereby one or two smaller provinces can challenge a majority's consensus. And that's quite clear. We can have discussion about it, of course, but I don't see any kind of Meech II if that means that we go by the same rules.

Second, the post-Meech mood of renewed nationalism is a resilient one in Quebec. I remember this summer when the Mohawk crisis came about, that was in mid July, I read many an editorial in English Canada that was triumphantly stating that the national question was going to go on the back burner and that Quebecers would soon forget about their mood of the 24th of June.

Well, if you look at the polls now, you will see that they stand consistently where they were just at the time of the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, so this is not something that is going to just go away when the mood is going to change. And that's quite remarkable because if you see public opinion today on any other question, it is very volatile. Political people know that, you know, it's going back up and down and that people change their minds about all sorts of things quite quickly today, but in Quebec this stand in favour of the larger sovereignty or political autonomy is there, and it seems there to stay.

Third, if Canada has any chance to remain a country, it will have to accept much greater changes than most people outside of Quebec are presently prepared to accept, so you see the argument developing

here because I think that Mr. Landry said the same thing but Dr. Bercuson said that, you know, Canada to remain a country must not accept radical change except, if I understand him well, a Triple E Senate.

So I was asked, when I discussed my presentation here, to deal specifically with the work of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Quebec -- that's its official name -- of the Belanger-Campeau Commission. The commission was created with some difficulty, one must admit, over the summer, but it is now in full speed. The commission has such a large mandate that it can operate almost without a framework. There's legislation creating it, and it says only that the commission must look at the future of Quebec and make recommendations. That's about all.

It is an enlarged parliamentary commission, and it is supposed to report to the government in March, and to make any recommendations it wants on Quebec's future, so it might come up with not only the constitutional recommendations but other kinds of recommendations also.

I am among the pundits who sharply criticized the commission from the beginning basically because of this kind of membership. It is overloaded with businessmen, and I insist businessmen and not women, and has no representation to speak of from the intellectual and cultural communities that are still, in my view, Quebec's most dynamic forces when it comes to reflecting on the future, whatever the new entrepreneurial class might say in Quebec right now.

It is also threatened by the fact that most members go there with an agenda that is dictated by their own party or by their own interest group. Their mandates are predefined. They are not sitting there as individuals but they are formally representatives of unions, let's say, or corporate associations or federal or provincial parties, et cetera, so I don't think that they're as free as they would be to think, without prejudice, on the future of Quebec.

The commission is also hindered by the fact that it is co-chaired because Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Parizeau, the Leader of the Parti Quebecois, were unable to agree on the chairperson. One, Mr. Belanger, is thus categorized by us people in the press as being a federalist and the other, Mr. Campeau, to wear an independentist label. They both deny that it is so, and they say that they agree and that they're nonpartisan and all that, and, of

course, they're not people that have been in active politics, but they've been unable to escape that kind of categorization and description.

By and large, however, I must say, that whatever we might have said at the very beginning, the commission is able to function quite well. The hearings have now been completed both in Montreal and Quebec City, and the commission is beginning next week to travel in other regions of the province. The hearings are televised and widely reported on, and they attract a lot of attention.

Many more people than I thought cared to participate in the hearings because they were given very short notice to make a presentation, and a lot of them have sent a written presentation to the commission. And in fact, we're deluged -- the kind of paper that Le Devoir is -- we're deluged with memoirs from all sorts of people who want to get in our pages because they can't go to the hearings because there is not enough time to hear all of them. So it's a massive review, but it's really a very lively discussion.

The total, I think, of presentations will be around 500 and they come from all horizons. Despite some, I must say, ugly scenes when strong differences were voiced in strong language, but they were less ugly scenes than what we've seen in the Senate, yes, most of the hearings have been quite calm.

When the commission put an end to its hearings in Montreal, that was on Wednesday this week, there was some talk of an already emerging consensus, the main elements of which were the following: First, again, I think it's quite clear that almost every member of this commission, and they've got members from all horizons, as I say, will agree that the status quo is unthinkable.

And second, they will agree that that's a very large and sketchy agreement, that Quebec needs much more political autonomy -- that's no news for you, of course, but you know, it needs to be repeated -- notably in the fields of immigration, communications, culture, industrial policy, research and development, agriculture, and I would add to this the list that Mr. Bercuson put together. You can add whatever you want.

I would insist on the topic of manpower training and development which is fastly getting to the top of the agenda in Quebec, but as Mr. Parizeau says, if you add all of the fields that people have been invoking

in this commission and asking more powers for Quebec, well, you end up with quite a sovereign country there. But I mean it's not the same people who are asking for the same powers, but nevertheless the real trend is really towards much more powers to be exercised by the Provincial Government.

And third, the preferred solution, and that's just the beginning of the consensus again, would be either a very decentralized federation or something, of course, like sovereignty association. There's more and more talk even in the provincial Liberal Party, so the government party, of Quebec. You hear continuously people, matter of fact they're saying, "Well, you know, we're looking at sovereignty association."

This was totally, absolutely unthinkable ten years ago at the time of the May 1980 Referendum, and so the same people that were on the "no" side at the time are now, as I said, talking about sovereignty association that they voted against in 1980 and fought against as if it were the most natural thing on earth, and especially this is true among the young members of the Liberal Party, a very active wing of the Quebec Liberal Party.

Mind you, a consensus is not unanimity, and I'm certainly not telling you this morning that the Equality Party, which is the Anglophone-protest provincial party, is part of such a thinking. But by the way, they've got problems of their own. They've got a four-member caucus, and they're now split in two, and they're asking for leadership review so, you know, they've got their problems. But nevertheless, they're sitting on the commission, and they disagree with any kind of a consensus like that.

But by and large, the Pequistes and the Liberals would agree, that this is the general sense, that the debates are opening, though the Pequistes and the Liberals are fighting like mad over questions of strategy or details of the overall final design of a new status for Quebec.

The kind of sophisticated questions that they're discussing, for example, is that do you need a supernational structure just like the European community or what kind of structure, and do you need to still send people in Ottawa or not, but I won't bore you with that this morning, but that's the kind of discussions that they are having.

Most polls, by the way, are supporting that general consensus with largely, one could state, two-thirds of the Quebec population supporting the idea of some kind of a sovereign Quebec somewhat formally associated with the rest of Canada. So to put it in a more sophisticated way, I

think that most members of the commission today, as we're speaking, would gladly settle for a kind of "confederal solution". That means a very, very decentralized federation such as the one that Europe is talking about, and if you want to hear a lot about Europe, you come to Quebec right now, and people have taken an interest in Europe, and they're discussing Europe almost as much as they do in Great Britain these days.

Premier Bourassa's own obsession with the European model has often led him to overstate the case, in my view, and to forget conveniently that Europe is still basically a collection of very, very sovereign states and that these states are still far from political union, and they're still battling a lot over trade liberalization. Most would nevertheless agree that the Canadians -- most in Quebec, I'm saying -- would nevertheless agree that the Canadian solution such as the one the Europeans seem to be contemplating, and they might achieve it only well into the second millennium, that this kind of solution would be good for Quebec and for Canada.

There is, then, a basic consensus in Quebec, I think, on the overall objective. The burning question, and that's very important -- that doesn't mean that it is very harmonious, the climate right now -- the burning question, the one that is rapidly emerging as the most important issue, is about strategy. How do you achieve a sort of economic Canadian community just like the EEC on this side of the Atlantic.

In Europe, and I think this is the basic difference that we must not forget in Quebec, people are sort of enthralled by the building process that they're in. Countries are working together to find common ground and they have a distinct sense of purpose about building Europe.

In Canada, if we really wish to get where Europe wants to go, we would have to start from totally another point. We would have to deconstruct the present Confederation, break it into several parts, and then only we would be able to find some new common ground. This is a process unheard of. I think it's almost impossible at least at first sight.

Speaking to the Belanger-Campeau Commission, and on Wednesday there were three representatives of Quebec's Association of Economists, and all three were from very different political backgrounds, but they agreed on one thing. Unless the rest of Canada is ready to rethink Confederation on its own, we are in for troubled times, and people are beginning to face that in Quebec also.

There is no stopping Quebec's movement, I think, towards more political autonomy, and I think that we would agree on that at least, but if there were to be an angry reaction in other provinces, that could create certainly economic turmoil and paralysis for years. And that's not blackmail by the way. It's just a stating of facts. If you can't stop the movement in Quebec, and if, you know, the reaction is not forthcoming in the rest of Canada, we're in for trouble, so we might as well face that, and that's a part of the discussion very much in Quebec also.

I would personally buy my colleague Don Braid's hypothesis in his just published brilliant book, and it's called "Break Up". I'm sure you've all read it already. I'm in the midst of it right now. And I would say that I expect more tensions and resistence from Ontario -- I might be wrong, mind you -- than from the West because I feel -- I might be wrong again -- that a true Confederation is also sometimes hoped for in this part of the country whatever the specific hostility to some Quebec demands or policies.

I won't dwell further on what the West could do. I'm here also to listen and to learn more about your own vision of this country, and I have little doubt that you also want some change. I'm only warning that your answer to these questions will have to come sooner than later. More and more, the Campeau-Belanger Commission and the many groups involved in the present debate are coming to the realization that a referendum will have to be held in Quebec in order to give other Canadians a clear sign that one-on-one negotiations are needed.

At the very beginning of the Campeau-Belanger Commission, people didn't realize that very clearly, but it's now coming quite soon that there's this other consensus building. We don't know what the question would be in that referendum, but that no Quebec Government, be it the Parti Quebecois Government or a Liberal Government could afford to just, you know, get re-elected next time, get elected or re-elected next time around, and say, "Well, this is the Quebec consensus and here we go."

I think that other provinces, and quite legitimately, will ask that the Quebec population to say something clearly, and not only in an election, so there's more and more talk of an early referendum once the work of the Belanger-Campeau Commission is completed.

Ontario's throne speech on Tuesday this week stated in a very bland way -- I was quite surprised that they didn't seem to

have one idea about constitutional issues -- but they stated that the next five years will be crucial for the settling of Canada's constitutional problem. I think that they've got the numbers wrong, and you might say that that happens from time to time. I doubt that Mr. Rae thought twice before talking of such a long time limit. By next summer, the moment of truth might be -- one moment of truth. I shouldn't say "the moment of truth" -- upon us.

For my part, I'm still of the view that a meeting of minds is possible if there is, in places such as this one, a deep desire for change, and I'm not talking only about the Triple E Senate.

Thank you very much.

MR. HORSMAN: Merci beaucoup. I'm sure that we will have a lively discussion, and you've brought us up-to-date, I think, on where the situation is in the Province of Quebec.

Our final presenter this morning is no stranger to most Albertans, I'm sure, certainly no stranger to me as we have crossed swords or hands on previous occasions.

Ted Byfield is the publisher of the B.C. Report and the Alberta Report. He's written frequently on the subject of the Constitution, and he was an early and rather vocal opponent of the Meech Lake Accord. But he is a thoughtful and concerned Western Canadian, and he has some, I'm sure, interesting Western perspective to provide to us today.

Ted?

MR. BYFIELD: Thanks very much, Jim, and I hope he remembers these nice things he said about me the next time.

I thought I should begin with a kind of disclaimer. I noticed, for instance, Professor Bercuson made it clear that he did not speak on behalf of the University of Calgary, but purely himself. Mr. Landry made it clear he was not speaking on behalf of the Province of New Brunswick, but merely himself. I would like to make it clear that I'm not speaking on behalf of all the rednecks in Alberta, but merely myself.

I think that what we're being told particularly by Ms. Bissonnette, is simply this. That Quebec is gone. It's going to go. Whether it goes part way now and all the way later or all the way now is now being debated really in Quebec. That's what she's telling us. They're trying to

decide whether it's to be all the way or part way. But the idea of preserving the status quo, as it's always been, is simply not one of the options. That's what she's saying, isn't it? And I think that's simply true. We have to recognize that because certainly everything we're hearing from Quebec makes that clear.

And I think we should realize two things about this: One is that there is a sense resident in Western Canada that in doing this Quebec is somehow or other treasonous to the Canadian cause as though Canada was somehow created all at the same time and that we were all partners together, and we all agreed to go forward together and now Quebec has welched on the deal.

Well, that is not what happened, not what happened at all. Quebec never asked to be married to Anglo Canada. Quebec was forced into Anglo Canada after 1760. And I think if you look at Quebec, as far as we can see it, from out here, what we are looking at has all the elements of a nation. It has its own language. It has its own culture and cultural development. There are music groups and so on and artistic groups that play to Quebec. It has contiguous boundaries. It has a common religious background. It is a very Catholic background. It has everything that is required to make a country. And above all, it has a magnificent history. It's a very stirring kind of history. I used to teach the history of Quebec a long time ago, and I was stirred by it.

And when I look at my redneck friends in Alberta, and I've got numbers of them, and I think now if all these people, these men and women, were raised in Quebec instead of being raised here on the prairies, what would their view be now? And I'll tell you right now they'd all be separatists in Quebec, and I think we have to recognize that what has happened there is in no sense treasonous to the Canadian cause. It's a logical development.

They didn't ask in, and they have worked for many, many years to make the best of it. And I think they've done a magnificent job of making the best of it. They have survived as a people. They have resisted the incursions of the Anglo-community which is not only around them in the rest of Canada on both sides of them, but also in tremendous force to the south of them in the United States, and if they deserve anything, it's our admiration.

But now, we, the rest of the country, have got to face ourselves with the question, okay, they're gone. What are we going to do? And I think that the first thing we have to do is get it very clear in our heads that things are now catastrophically different than the way they were 25 or 30 years ago. How are we going to govern what's left? Can we hold it together?

Unfortunately, we do not have the same kind of driving patriotism that they have in Quebec. That's sad, but it's a fact. Because we come from many, many diverse backgrounds, and while it's true we have a wonderful history, but we don't teach it well -- except, of course, in Professor Bercuson's class -- and you can tell by the things our young people say that they really are not acquainted with this history and very little of our geography.

But if you do look back and you think, well, now, when we put this system we've got, this Confederation, together back in 1867, exactly what was the situation in Canada? Well, Canada at that time consisted of two settlements, I guess you'd have to call them establishments, one around the southern part of the Great Lakes and the other in the St. Lawrence Valley with another colonial presence on the Atlantic Coast. In 1867, Winnipeg was scarcely or wasn't really yet out of the fur trade. There was almost nothing except the fur trade in what is now Alberta and Saskatchewan, and British Columbia consisted of little tiny colonies hanging on the Pacific Coast.

So that the founders of Confederation looked at this huge empty place out there and they said, "We can make that ours; we're going to settle that; we're going to put the country from coast-to-coast, and we will establish that part of the country essentially as colonies." And we think, well, that's terrible, but at the time it made perfect sense. They therefore created a Confederation that envisioned these western areas as colonial areas, and whether they admit it or not, the same attitude has obtained in Toronto every since to this day.

Now, what we propose to do about that in the West is say, "Why can't we look at other large countries: the United States, Australia, and we see that within their forms of government they have a Triple E Senate. That's what we need. That's what we should have had all along."

So we now come to the new situation with a proposal, and while in the status quo, as things at the moment are, I agree with

Professor Bercuson, there is no chance of getting it. There might be a very good chance of getting it in the Canada that survives the inevitable departure of Quebec because at that point, no one is going to be more frightened of the total break up of the country than Ontario is, and they will be ready to deal and I think we should be conscious of that fact.

However, what we must face in the interval is an exceedingly dangerous situation because there are two, what you could call, establishments in Canada that must deal with the impending departure of Quebec. One of them is the political establishment at Ottawa, and the other is the financial establishment in Toronto, and both of these establishments regard the departure of Quebec as utterly unthinkable.

Imagine what would happen in Ottawa if Quebec became a sovereign nation. What happens at Hull? Does Hull become part of Canada? Half of our government buildings are now over in Hull. Where do they go? Do they go to Quebec? Do they come back to Canada? What happens to them? What happens to the civil service establishment, which is A, $400 billion bigger than we can afford, and secondly, based entirely upon, and you can certainly justify it, a bilingual/bicultural country which no longer exists? What's going to happen in Ottawa? What's going to happen to all those government jobs? What they say is, "We can't even think about this, so we'll get Keith Spicer to take care of it."

What's going to happen in Toronto? What happens to all those branches of the Bank of Nova Scotia? Interesting, it used to belong to Nova Scotia; it now belongs to Toronto. The whole Toronto hegemony is based upon a nation of coast-to-coast country, and all of a sudden a great big chunk of it is taken out from the middle and so Toronto says, "We can't even think about that."

Now, Quebec is negotiating, in other words, with two establishments. The one in Ottawa that can't think about the possible departure of Quebec and the other one in Toronto that can't think about the possible departure of Quebec, so what Quebec will obviously ask for -- and us rednecks would do the same if we happened to be living down there instead of here -- what it will plainly ask for is a situation in which it has all the sovereignty of an independent country as outlined by Ms. Bissonnette and retains a very, very strong political connection with Canada. The same number of seats in the House of Commons, for example, and yet a sovereign situation

at home. That will be the price. That's what we would ask, and that's what they would ask. They're asking this price. It doesn't prove them evil. It only proves them following their own national interests.

And who is going to resist paying that price? The Ottawa establishment and the Toronto one because between the two of them they control the Government of Canada. How are they going to resist it? They can't. They'll pay it. They'll pay it, and we'll actually pay the bills out here.

So I think that what we must realize, and this is a total presentation that I could make, is simply this: A, Quebec is going to go. B, that those chiefly responsible for negotiating the terms of its departure are utterly incapable of dealing with it because they possibly can't stand to see it go. And C, it therefore falls upon the governments of the Western Provinces and of the Atlantic Provinces to come somehow together and stand for whatever is left.

How we do it, I don't know. I think only this: That we cannot depend on either Ottawa or Toronto to represent our interests from this point forward.

Thank you.

MR. HORSMAN: Thank you. Well, there's some provocative remarks, folks.

Just before we get on to some discussion in the roundtable here, I'm going to just acknowledge the presence of a group of Grade 6 students from Pineridge Community School located in the constituency of Calgary Montrose, which is represented in the Legislative Assembly by Rick Orman, the Minister of Energy. And Judy McKay is the teacher, and I see she has some other adults with her, and I'd like to welcome these young Canadians and Albertans to this process, and I hope that you'll find it constructive.

I see you're all having to stand at the back. I regret that, but please feel welcome, and rest assured that all of us up here with gray hairs, some of us getting grayer as we go along in this process, may not solve all the problems, and we may leave them all up to you young folks, so it's good that you could come along and listen to what we're doing today.

Well, we've had four interesting and challenging presentations from members of our Task Force this morning, and I'd like to encourage any dialogue that the members of the Task Force or the presenters

would like to engage in now. And I'll try and act as the impartial chairman or referee as the case may be.

Yes, Dennis Anderson?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask Ms. Bissonnette if there isn't some possibility, in terms of a restructured federalism, for powers to be delegated to the provinces which would satisfy the needs of Quebec, and in addition, the needs of Alberta, the needs of New Brunswick, other parts of the country.

Is that a possibility from Quebec's perspective, and I guess I'll ask the followup one at the same time. If it is, is it not beneficial for Quebec to now enter into wider discussions with more than just the Ottawa Government but with the other partners that have been in this Confederation that are today --

MS. BISSONNETTE: Well, all along that's what Quebec has been asking. I mean you might remember all the constitutional discussions of the '60s, of the '70s, whatever. Quebec was always saying, "Well, you know, before, for example, patriating the Constitution, we should look at the new division of powers," and then the appetite was quite strong for something like that.

The problem is that Meech, in fact, and the failure of Meech killed any kind of possibility that it could be dealt with in a traditional way. So if there were a way, today, if there were a way in Canada to delegate to Quebec as much power as it wants, yes, that could be possible. But then I send the question back to you. Do you think that it is possible?

I mean, if the little things that were contained in Meech were not possible to achieve through three years of discussion, there is this total loss of faith in Quebec that anything else could be achieved through this larger discussion that you're talking about. And then that the only way to achieve more power is just to go it on your own and to say, "Okay, this is it, we're going out, and then can we arrange something in terms of an economic association," but then we state that we're sort of taking control of the powers that we want.

So the demonstration is still -- that's why people in Quebec argue with Mr. Chretien, for example, that the burden of the proof is

now on the federalists' side to prove that this is still possible. And this has shifted totally from the situation of ten years ago when the burden of the proof was on the separatists. It's today for the people who are true federalists to show that Canada could achieve such a delegation of powers to Quebec.

So I'm, in fact, sending the question back to you.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, if I could just respond in like form.

I personally believe that it is possible, but that it has to come from the perspectives of the parts of the country which would benefit from those power distributions. In other words, we in Alberta have certain areas which may well be better done, for the Canadians living in this part of the country, through a provincial authority.

That may be true in New Brunswick, but we have to have that dialogue, not between Ottawa and Quebec alone, because the interests in Ottawa have already been talked about in terms of others, but in terms of those partners of the country which are not always sent to the central core of decision-making.

And so I would encourage Quebec to enter into those discussions with the rest of us.

MS. BISSONNETTE: I think that there would be a meeting of minds certainly between the West and Quebec, but then at one point or the other you would be stuck with the process question again which is, you know, once you and I agree, for example, on the kind of powers that should be delegated to the provinces and in an enlarged loose Confederation where the West would be sort of more -- Alberta would be stronger, for example, in terms of provincial powers and things like that.

At one point, you've got to negotiate that with the rest of Canada, and you know that there are people, as Mr. Byfield would say, either in Toronto or in Ottawa who would never even think about it, and I'm not talking about sovereignty there. I'm just talking about any kind of decentralization.

They're arguing forever that Canada is the most decentralized federation in the world as if this was untouchable, as if it couldn't be even more decentralized, as if this was the Bible, and you don't touch it.

So I would again say that the Canadian process, as

it is right now, is blocking us from this kind of move.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, just a final comment on this aspect of the discussion.

There's no question that the process is now a difficult one for Canadians to answer. I think first of all we need to know of the will, and we need to have those discussions to assure ourselves that either there is the will there on the part of entities other than just in Ottawa, or as Mr. Byfield might say, in Toronto, but the will outside and some common needs so that we could share. We need to determine whether that's true or not, and I worry that we're going to -- because of the frustration with the process which has been centralized in one area of Quebec, possibilities that might exist between Quebec and the other parts of our country might not be explored.

MR. HORSMAN: That's more of a statement I think, is it, than a question.

MR. LANDRY: Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, if I may make just one comment on that. The dynamic of discussions in Canada has been terrible in that, you know, ever since I was a kid and I started studying history and social sciences in school, the perspective that we were always presented with, and I'm sure people in Western Canada were always presented with, was that Quebec were making demands and the rest of Canada had to react, and for the most part, the rest of Canada has always said "No", and for the most part, what Quebec has done is increased the stakes. You say, "No", and that's exactly what's happening today.

I'm not saying that Lise is doing that, but that's what's happening in Quebec today. You've said "No" to us on Meech Lake, therefore, we'll just go one step further, just twist the thing a little bit further.

MR. BYFIELD: In order to what?

MR. LANDRY: In order to achieve what Quebecers think are legitimate achievements.

MR. BYFIELD:

And what is that?

MR. LANDRY: Well, I think, you know, we can argue, and we've argued over the Meech Lake debate whether Quebec is distinct or whether Quebec is different. Well, it's a known fact. Everyone of us here would agree that Quebec is different at least in its language and its culture. You've said that it's different in its history. It's different, some people have said, in its legal system. It's different in its connections with the rest of the world, and it's different with its linkages with the rest of the country.

I mean Alberta and British Columbia and Albertans and British Columbians and Saskatchewan people and Manitobans share a lot more in common than Quebecers do with Ontarians because Quebec is different. If Quebec is different, it therefore has different needs. And that's what Quebec has been trying to tell the country for a long time.

MR. BYFIELD: But those needs are sovereignty. That's what they're saying. We want our own country. That's our need.

MR. LANDRY: But, Ted, when Quebec says that it needs powers over communications, why is that? It says it wants powers over communications because communications today, television, the radio, the economic media, are an important part of culture --

MR. BYFIELD: Certainly.

MR. LANDRY: -- and language. And Quebec has those needs much more than we in New Brunswick perhaps or at least the Anglophone part in New Brunswick has or Western Canada has because it is different from a cultural standpoint.

And I think when we've said that provinces are all equal -- there should be no special status; there should be no special powers -- what we've said is, on the one hand we say, "Quebec is different." On the other hand we say, "It's different, but it should fit in the same mold as the rest of the country."

MR. HORSMAN:

Well, I have a number of other people who want to get in on this. I'd just like to jump in as Chairman, though, because Dr. Bercuson is not going to be able to stay with us for the entire time, and I'd like to just pose a question to him before he departs.

And we're going to have a discussion about it next session, next week, on the economics of federalism. But I wonder if you, from your perspective, could indicate how you feel the Constitution is linked to the economic future of Canada.

Is that an unfair question to you as an historian --

DR. BERCUSON: No.

MR. HORSMAN: -- or should I pose it to --

DR. BERCUSON: I'm still not exactly sure what it is you're asking.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, what I'm really getting at is the division of responsibilities now in the Constitution, and how changing those would impact upon the economy and how the fiscal policies of the governments are established and so on.

DR. BERCUSON: Well, I think first of all that the essential powers of the Federal Government or the central government are powers over the money supply, banking. I don't like John Crow's interest rate policy, but you have to have one national interest rate policy. Powers over the ability to negotiate tariff agreements with other foreign states, and to me, these are essential federal powers. I think the powers of taxation that the Federal Government has, which are very broad, are also essential. I don't want to pay the GST any more than the next person, but I think the Federal Government has a perfect right and responsibility to have those kinds of powers.

I haven't seen anything that would indicate to me that there's any need to redistribute powers from the Federal Government to the provinces in order to see greater industrial growth. We had a problem here, as we are all aware in Alberta, in the late '70s and the early '80s, with the Federal Government over energy, but the '82 Constitution gave us the guarantee of full control over our resources that we'd been seeking for quite some time.

I would have to say, in fact, that we have to start looking even in the other direction; that in order to compete in an extremely competitive and increasingly competitive world, we may have to think about the Federal Government assuming more of a role in the creation of industrial strategies than it has in the past.

And I've been urging in one part of this country and another a national educational strategy, which as an educator I think is very badly needed in this country. And I can see that the Federal Government would have to play some role in the coordination of a national educational strategy.

So I guess I have to say that I don't see any need -- living in the part of Canada that I do, I don't see any need for any redistribution of powers. That's why I said, "I think the situation is fine as it is." That's why I answer Monsieur Landry, and I say to him, "I understand why Quebec needs more powers, but we, in my opinion, don't." And therefore, the problem is, how do you accommodate Quebec within Confederation, and my answer is, if Quebec needs the kinds of powers that a sovereign state has, then Quebec has to be a sovereign state. That's what I'm saying.

MR. HORSMAN: Stockwell Day wants to get in.

MR. DAY: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Anderson anticipated my first question, and he feels he has some answers to it, but I don't, and I'd just like it left on the table and for future discussion. Can other provinces use the same mechanisms that Quebec will use to develop its own sovereignty, can other provinces use those same mechanisms and allow some kind of confederacy to develop that would still maintain an umbrella of Canada, so I appreciate you giving that back to Mr. Anderson, Ms. Bissonnette, but I'd like that question left on the table and proceed to another one.

First, on the economic side, Mr. Chairman, that you've just touched on, I think it's important. Mr. Bercuson and Mr. Landry commented on our wonderful social safety net and what a caring society we are and how we care for each other. I'd like you to know that's a bit of a mirage. That has come at an extreme expense, and in OECD countries our debt to GDP ratio, only Italy is worse than ours, so that safety net has been built on a false

set of economics and is evaporating. It's a bit of a mirage.

Getting to my question. Mr. Landry, you talk about we need to understand each other more. I think we need to come to grips with the first element of understanding which is I want other people to understand that I enjoy their ability to have diversity but not at my expense.

I've lived beside a neighbour who is from Newfoundland, and we have a wonderful time together. I don't understand all the implications of his thinking, but he understands that his diversity in his backyard can't be at my expense, so he brings his dog in the house when it starts barking. And that's our first element of understanding. We'll never understand each other right across this country.

I'm wondering, Ms. Bissonnette, when you talked about your predictability. Two questions for you. Did you successfully predict the outcome of the last referendum, the oui ou non question, and --

MS. BISSONNETTE: It was easy to predict.

MR. DAY: And what will be the question, how will the question be framed, as you say the question is coming quickly, what will be the question that will be put to the people of Quebec in the coming referendum that you see?

MS. BISSONNETTE: As I said in my presentation, this is soon getting to be the question right now. What kind of question will be put in that referendum? 1980 was easy to predict even if at the very beginning of the referendum campaign, there was some kind of uncertainty as to whether the results would be "Yes" or "No". Anyone who had surveyed and looked at Quebec at the time and looked at the real forces behind all the rhetoric would know that the burden of the proof, as I was saying, was on the independentists' side at the time, and that Rene Levesque and his troops had to fight all the way against all the larger forces who were saying that Quebec would lose on those circumstances.

Well, this has changed tremendously, Meech being the key to that. I mean, today, when Mr. Chretien, for example, comes to Quebec, he's about the only real orthodox federalist, I would say, that is on the front scene. There are others, but they're more outspoken. He's very much

alone, and he has got the burden of the proof on his side to show that, yes, Canada could, you know, pull this off again and find something to accommodate Quebec, but what kind of questions will be put?

I think it's very difficult to predict because they're only beginning to discuss this, but they will probably ask for a change of status, and there will be such a consensus behind it through the the Belanger-Campeau Commission, that the answer should be a resounding "Yes" to some kind of – it might be a list of powers, I mean, but in the end what does it mean but, you know, some kind of sovereignty for Quebec.

And then you go from there. That's just a negotiating position, of course. You're not stating that, "Okay, tomorrow, we're going to be a sovereign state," but then you go from there.

And that's the very process that Rene Levesque was advocating at the time, that you just obtain whatever, you know, a "Yes" from the Quebec population, and then you go and you negotiate from there.

And strangely, very often, it's almost bizarre. I mean if you go back to Rene Levesque's writings, it's almost the rhetoric of the Liberals today in Quebec, of the Provincial Liberals. So that's what we're going to see, but it's a reverse situation from what it was in 1980, there's no doubt in my mind about that, to the point of being bothering.

Mr. Bercuson said he was in Montreal last week. He should have known there was some discussion about the atmosphere of the Belanger-Campeau Commission. People are coming, and if they are federalists, they are attacked. I mean it. "What are you saying?" "Can you really demonstrate this and that?" And they are the ones who are sort of fighting for their life in front of this commission. Because even other federalists would go after them and just have to prove every detail, and everything, and all of that, so the climate has changed tremendously.

MR. HORSMAN: Thank you, Stock.

Stan Schumacher has a question he wants to pose to Dr. Bercuson.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Before I put my question, Mr. Chairman, I hope maybe Mr. Bercuson could elaborate, when responding to my question about Senate Reform, how he would see the expansion of the federal or the central

government in education policies. And I don't like to use the word "federal government" because as far as I'm concerned, this "federal" word has been absolutely perverted. People mean "central". They don't mean "federal" at all when they use it.

MR. BERCUSON: Why not national?

MR. SCHUMACHER: Well, that might be all right.

MR. BERCUSON: I'm not ashamed to say that.

MS. BISSONNETTE: There is no problem in Quebec.

MR. SCHUMACHER: I think that's more appropriate because in our country over the last number of years, there's certainly been no relation between "federalism" and how people use that word. But anyway, you talk about expanding the central government's or the national government's role in education. The chairman asked you about the connection between the Constitution and economics, and Stockwell Day has mentioned the horrendous deficit and debt that has been built up.

Education, as we all know, is one of the most expensive things in our governmental system. Are we as Albertans going to be looking forward to some method of paying for this new national initiative, or will the Triple E Senate protect us against that? And if so, I would like to have some type of road map from the professor as to how he sees the Triple E Senate coming about because -- I'll just interject my own personal view -- at least Meech Lake gave us a road map, and I don't see any road map now.

MR. BERCUSON: First of all, I think Meech Lake gave us a road map into a swamp and ultimate disaster, so if you think that's the kind of road map we should have, then I disagree with you. I don't see any connection between what I said about education and the Senate, so let me be very precise about what I'm saying about education.

I did not talk about some super-educational body to be established by the Federal Government or federal schools or anything rather silly like that. What I said is that I think the educational policies of the

probably nine provinces of this country need to be coordinated to a greater degree in the future than they have in the past. If you doubt that, than I ask you to take a look at the European educational systems, the Japanese educational system, and so on. We are all over the map. One province does one thing, another province does another thing, and in many cases what we're doing is counterproductive. We have to be turning out people who are prepared to replace the retiring and dying work force. We are not doing it.

In the area that I work in, for example, which is graduate studies, we are looking at an absolute shortage of doctoral graduates in this country within the next five to ten years. We will not be able to replace the academic staff of the universities. We will not be able to replace the research scientists who are working for corporations and research institutions unless we attempt to import them from the outside of this country if they're willing to come here.

Now, if we don't begin to think about education as a national resource which we need to enable us to compete against the Pacific Rim countries, that is as a national resource, then I think we're sunk. So I think the Federal Government has to play a coordinating role, and I didn't say the Federal Government has to start getting in and establishing national schools.

The Federal Government, in fact, is already playing a coordinating role in the area of secondary education through its various granting agencies, but it is a very weak role, and the three major federal granting agencies really cannot determine the direction in which research should be going in this country. So I think there needs to be a federal presence in the sense of coordinating the educational policies of the country.

The other thing I want to say is that, as I'm sure you're well aware, the Federal Government is already paying a very large part of the shot or is attempting to do so for post-secondary education in this country, but because it is not allowed by the Constitution to direct its payments to post-secondary education, it is very clear that in some provinces that it is possible for provinces to use those funds for purposes other than post-secondary education.

And I don't think that there's any sense to that either, so that's what I was talking about, and I don't really see where the Triple E Senate has any connection with any of that.

MR. SCHUMACHER: No, but I still would like to know how you would see we would get a Triple E Senate. I haven't heard a word about that.

MR. BERCUSON: You mean, see how it will come into effect?

MR. SCHUMACHER: How we can attain that.

MR. BERCUSON: Well, I don't think we can unless Ted is right. And I sort of, interestingly enough, find myself agreeing more and more with Ted Byfield these days.

MR. BYFIELD: This is terrifying both of us.

MR. BERCUSON: I don't know. Maybe I better buy a pickup also. I don't know.

But I think the task that we have ultimately is going to be to save the rest of Canada, ROC, or as is called in Quebec, a Canada hors du Quebec, Canada outside of Quebec. I think there is a possibility that Ontario might be convinced under some sort of a rearrangement that might take place when and if Quebec leaves Confederation.

There's a possibility because at that point Ontario's members in the House of Commons will be outnumbered by Western and Atlantic Canadian representatives. So that's a possibility under that circumstance that we might be able to achieve a Triple E Senate, but I don't think with Quebec in Canada, with Quebec and Ontario acting together to block Triple E Senate, I don't think it's going to be possible to achieve it.

MR. HORSMAN: Thank you. Jack Ady?

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question goes to Professor Bercuson as well. He indicated in his remarks that although a Triple E Senate has been something Alberta has been very interested in and certainly would answer, hopefully answer, many of the concerns that we have in Canada to serve Alberta well, he indicated that it would not be a reality in Canada as it exists today.

That being the case and also being the case that

Quebec may not leave Canada quickly -- personally, I don't think they will leave quickly -- in that case, would you suggest that there may be an attempt to bring on a less extensive form of senate reform, and if so, would you advocate that Alberta accept a less extensive form, or should Alberta be holding out for the Triple E Senate as originally proposed?

DR. BERCUSON: Well, that's an interesting question, and I think you may be absolutely right. I do think there will be negotiations. They may be one-on-one, or they may be negotiations with the other nine provinces and so on.

And I don't mean to imply that anyone says that there wouldn't be because there has to be because there are either negotiations or there is UDI or there is status quo, and I don't think UDI is in the cards for Quebec, and the status quo is clearly unacceptable, so there is going to have to be something in the way of negotiations.

MR. HORSMAN: Could I just stop you for a second. UDI?

DR. BERCUSON: Unilateral Declaration of Independence. We used to use that phrase, I guess, in another context 20 something years ago, in another context.

MR. HORSMAN: I just have to tell you I have a real bias against acronyms and initials that people don't understand.

MS. BISSONNETTE: Historian jargon.

DR. BERCUSON: You're absolutely right, and I apologize for historical jargon. Yes, you're right.

The scenario that you're talking about could come about depending on the extent of the position that Quebec puts forward in the negotiations. If Quebec is basically coming to the table and saying, "Look it, we want sovereignty, but then we also want some form of association," then I think the answer is going to be "No" because there wouldn't be any room for any negotiation over the Senate under those circumstances.

If Quebec comes forward with a position that is

somewhat softer than that, and it is what I've called an "Asymmetrical Federalism" where we have a list of powers that we'd like, the rest of Canada can remain the way it is, but we want these extra powers, but we still want to have the Senate, and we still want to have the House of Commons, then I think it might be possible to negotiate some form of Senate reform because then we would be talking about keeping Quebec in Canada in a way, and it might be possible to put this on the table as a counterbalance to Quebec's demands or requirements, whatever you want to call it. So it's really going to depend, I think, on what comes out of Belanger-Campeau and the referendum process.

MR. HORSMAN: Fred Bradley?

MR. BRADLEY: Well, I want to discuss this concept of equality of provinces, and Mr. Landry raised it, and I also think Professor Bercuson has a view on it. And Mr. Landry said it's false to believe in the equality of provinces.

One of the tenets of Alberta's constitutional position has been that we believe in the equality of provinces, and we are striving for the equality of provinces, and I think that that has been our position in the past, and I think that we always believe in fairness and equity, and that's one of the reasons that we believe in the Triple E Senate because it, again, strengthens the notion of equality of provinces. Could either of you comment on that?

Is it desirable, in terms of the views that we've held traditionally, to continue to hold that view and move towards equal provinces? You'd have to convince me that there is some illogical reason why we shouldn't continue to strive for equality. I think that's what the country wants. I think that's why we've had some of the divisions we have in the country because there's a sense that we've being treated unequally, and we aren't looked upon as being equal partners in the country. Could you comment on that?

And then I want to ask Ms. Bissonnette, in terms of her contribution today, could she discuss under what rules Quebec might come back to the constitutional table with the Federal Government and the rest of the provinces? And also, could she comment on, is Quebec going to decide on emotional grounds in terms of their movement towards independence, or are

they going to look at the economic reasons?

I think there's a view in parts of the country that Quebec could not survive economically on its own, and at least there's that view in the country. Could you comment on that.

DR. BERCUSON: Well, maybe as a historian, I should go first and then allow Mr. Landry to put his position. What I said was that constitutionally and legally, the assertion that the provinces are equal is false. It doesn't mean that they shouldn't be, and I think I'll sort of get to that in a minute, but I want to explain very briefly why that is false.

Unlike the United States, where the States came together to form the National Government and the United States of America, the provinces did not form Canada, and they did not form the National Government. Canada and the National Government was formed by the British Parliament in 1867, which was the only legislative body that had the power to do so.

In fact, in the provinces there is a lot of historical evidence that people of the provinces were not even happy about coming together, but it doesn't really matter one way or another because the provinces, which were colonies at the time, did not have the legal or constitutional power to join together. They couldn't even if they wanted to. That's one of the reasons why we are very different than the United States.

When they did come together, they came together with all kinds of different conditions. There were even different legislative structures. Quebec, for example, at one point had an Upper House and a Lower House. The other provinces did not have Upper Houses and Lower Houses. They had different conditions as to language, different conditions as to religion, different conditions as to financial arrangements, and so on, and so forth.

When Alberta and Saskatchewan entered Confederation in 1905, we did so without having any control over our natural resources as Manitoba did. The other provinces all did, so there was no equality of provinces at the time.

What has happened is that in the last 40 years or so, the country has been transformed. The people of the country, I think, have accepted more and more, a certain series of democratic notions. Whether

they've bought them from the Americans or come to the conclusions themselves or maybe bought them from European societies, this is clearly a society today that believes that it is a democracy in the full sense of the word and that the provinces ought to be equal.

And that's the problem that you've got when you come to this whole Meech Lake debate because you've taken the position that the provinces are all equal. Well, does that mean that Alberta is equal to Quebec? Quebec would say, no, it isn't a province like all the others. It's a different kind of a structure all together so you have a contradiction there.

Quebec would say that as a representative of one of the founding peoples of this country, it should go one-on-one with the rest of Canada. Well, as an English- speaking Canadian -- I'm not an English Canadian; I'm an English-speaking Canadian -- I would say that's silly because there aren't two founding peoples. If you look at 1867 there were about 46 founding peoples in this country.

So your notion of the equality of the provinces is a very attractive one, and I know that this government has taken that position, but I don't think it helps the constitutional political process to say that this is an absolute notion because I don't think it is an absolute notion, and if we do say that, I think we get ourselves into all kinds of contradictions that we find very difficult to get out of.

MR. LANDRY: That is the point that I was trying to make as well. And what I was addressing there was the notion that Premier Wells put forward in the Meech Lake debate. That Meech Lake was going to destroy this beautiful equality that we had among provinces in Canada.

Well, we've never had equality of provinces, and we have to look at equality of provinces and say, "What do we mean by that?" I mean is it that all provinces should have exactly the same provincial powers? Is that what we're saying? That's one thing. If we look at the equality of provinces in terms of Senate reform, is it that all provinces should be equal in terms of the number of senators they have?

I have no problems with that, but you're going to have to define the powers of the Senate, though, and the powers the provinces are going to have in the Senate in opposition to the powers that exist in the House of Commons because at the federal level the provinces are never going

to all be equal. Obviously, the House of Commons will keep powers and Ontario and Quebec will always -- as long as Quebec stays -- run that to a large extent.

So there's no perfect equality, and you have to define what you mean by the "equality of provinces", but the idea that the provinces, in terms of the exercise of their powers, have been equal -- and I agree with Professor Bercuson -- is wrong. They've not been equal. And the idea that they can be equal, if we stick to that absolute equality, we won't be able to keep the country together if we do that.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, ladies and gentlemen, I think it's an appropriate time perhaps to have a coffee break. We've been now sitting here for over two hours. We're going to get back after a coffee break.

I just want to say one thing. One has to be very careful about asking questions as a politician. I asked the question at the outset of these discussions, when the Task Force was established, that Alberta has believed that the Triple E Senate should be our number one constitutional priority, but during the course of our discussions we are going to have to ask Albertans, is that still the case? And we're going to do that.

But I was immediately jumped on, and Ted and I had a discussion on the telephone about this, by people who said, "Uh-huh, that just proves that Jim Horsman is not any longer a strong advocate of the Triple E Senate," which is an interesting twist, I thought, to my question. But I do think we have to ask those fundamental questions, and that's what we're asking Albertans to tell us.

Does the current division of responsibilities serve the interests of Albertans within Canada? Are Sections 91 and 92 the appropriate division? Should education continue to be the exclusive responsibility of the provincial governments? That matter has been raised effectively this morning by Dr. Bercuson.

As a former Minister of Advanced Education and a member of the Council Education for Canada, I have some fairly strong views, but I am not about to impose them on Albertans. I want to hear what Albertans think about that matter. And that, of course, is what we're going to be discussing.

Is the British Parliamentary System the appropriate

government model for Canada, its provinces, and the Federal Parliament? You know, we've got to ask these fundamental questions, and people have got to start thinking about those very fundamental things, and this morning we've had some very provocative points of view on the future of this country.

But one thing is certainly clear, and that is this. No matter what happens to Quebec, it's not going to go away. It can't be towed out to sea and dropped in the ocean, and the seven million Quebecers who live there are not going to go away, and somehow or another the people who live in this northern half of the North American continent are going to have to learn to get along with each other, and that's the challenge that we're going to try and wrestle with in the next while.

Let's take a coffee break and come back at it.

(Coffee Break)

MR. HORSMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen, just by way of explanation, we are going to spend about another hour before we adjourn, and as I indicated, Dr. Bercuson had to leave, and I think Ms. Bissonnette will return, however, and we'll take about another half hour of dialogue at this table, and then we've invited you to submit written questions which I will try to get to the particular panelists.

The approach we've taken with respect to written questions is that for this particular roundtable, that's the way we would like public participation. When we get to our public hearings later on, after the new year, we would expect the process to change somewhat, and that we would then not only have written submissions, but verbal presentations and questions and answers in a verbal form. But for this particular set of discussions we thought we would utilize this procedure, and it's worked pretty well so far.

Just to get the ball rolling again, I'd like to put this to you, and a week ago yesterday, I was in New York City participating in a conference called "Restructuring the North American Partnership", and it was a very intensive day and a half of discussions. But we looked at a number of things that are impacting on the world. And the word "globalization" was used over and over and over again.

I think we all understand what "globalization"

means. The world is shrinking because of communications, because of international trade, because of all the other international events that are shaping the world, and that's one current that's running. On the other hand, it appears to me that there's another current running as well, and that is one of increased, what I call "tribalizing", "tribalism", and it seems to me that perhaps what's happening in Quebec is a form of tribalism.

Could you comment on that, Ted? Would you agree with that?

MR. BYFIELD: I don't think that nationalism is about to depart if that's what's meant by "tribalism", and that what's happening in Quebec is simply an evidence of nationalism, something that we've been increasingly aware of for the last 400 years. Global conditions can sort of obliterate our whole problem, even global economic conditions.

If we were about to enter into a major depression, and some economists are warning us that that's a good possibility, that depression would halt the entire Quebec dialogue right now because nobody thinks in terms of revolution when they don't know how they're going to provide a meal for the next day, and it's simply -- revolutions are the product of prosperity. I know that we're led to believe otherwise, but the people who create revolutions -- and that's what's going on in Quebec -- are themselves prosperous.

Now, if the layoffs that are now becoming evident everywhere in Ontario and are becoming increasingly apparent in Quebec, reach a crisis stage within the next six months and after the GST hits, that's certainly a possibility, I think we may find an entirely different agenda emerging right across Canada. How are we going to survive with Quebec, without Quebec, anything, and they're going to be thinking the same way, so that's globalism, and in that sense globalism will rapidly do away with tribalism.

But then, of course, as soon as we're out of it again, we'll go back to where we were before, and we'll be having meetings here 20 years from now in a sense. I'll be here, but Mr. Horsman will be dead by then.

MR. HORSMAN:

Well, if you're not here, your spirit will live on. Ms. Bissonnette?

MS. BISSONNETTE: I think I got the general sense of the question -- I'm sorry, I was caught in a television interview -- about tribalism, and I think Fernand also at some point this morning alluded to this that Quebec was sort of going against a sense of history today which is, you know, a larger ensemble and integrating into larger groups. That, I think, very much needs many nuances.

First of all, if you look at Europe and what's happening there right now, you will see that, yes, there is a movement towards integration into larger groups, but at the same time and at the very same moment, you've got a sort of reemergence of national movements all over the place, and this is because, of course, the integration into these larger ensembles are creating exactly that movement. People want to have a European identity, but feeling that this is a very large identity, they want also to identify with their own local identity.

Fernand Landry was there in London about, what, in the spring. We had a conference on minorities throughout the world and how do they react today, and what's their status and all of that, and we had to realize, all of us, that this movement that we all said was gone with the 19th Century and all of that is reliving right now because, you know, there were people from Brittany, there were people from Corsica, and there were people from all over. And what they were looking at is a form of reorganizing around, you know, the local lines and having more powers and having more status so this is a double movement.

And I think that's what exactly we're seeing in Quebec. The last thing we could accuse the people of Quebec right now is of being tribal. In fact, they were the ones, as you know, who embraced free trade zealously, and in terms also of their position in the world and their relations with the EEC and all of that, so that is a double movement and it's very much the trend right now throughout the world, and I think we will have to rethink our basic concepts about what is nationalism and to sort of forget.

Mr. Trudeau has insisted all his life that Quebec's nationalism was a tribal movement, and I think he's done great harm to our mutual understanding by doing that. Because he was sticking to this position

that, you know, nationalism is nothing but a remnant of the 19th Century. Well, the 20th Century is almost over, and we've not got rid of it, and it's being, at this point in time, a very positive force.

MR. HORSMAN: Just one point I'd just like to throw in. Federal organizations of peoples in the federal governments, federations. The U.S.S.R. is a federation, and clearly, what is happening there is a pulling apart of the federation and movement away from the powers of the center which were rigidly opposed by the structure of the Communist system.

So it strikes me that in some sense there may be a parallel occurring here in Canada. Would you subscribe to that?

MS. BISSONNETTE: Well, I would be careful not to compare the U.S.S.R. with Canada nevertheless because I think that, you know, though we might in Quebec feel that the federation is constraining us, it's not exactly the same thing as the people in the U.S.S.R.

But, again, I think that at some point if these nationalisms that have been oppressed for so long in the U.S.S.R., if there is some kind of a deal that is struck with Moscow at some point, and I think there will be, then they could recreate a federation that would be more convenient for the people. Again, I think that these movements are not contrary, and that if you join a larger group, you've got to keep a sense of identity, and that's what we're seeing in Europe, and that's what we're going to see in Canada.

The only difference that I see though between Europe and Canada is this: For example, we Canadians look at North America and especially at the United States as something very negative. We don't like it. It's Americanization and all of that, while the Europeans, most European nations, have a sense of pride about being Europeans and being part of this continent while we in Canada, and there is a movement like that in Quebec also, see all of this as very negative. I mean there's no positive thing coming from the United States and all of that, so I see that our sense of identity is not similar.

Nevertheless, again, to repeat myself, I think that the Quebec movement right now is not distinct from many of the movements that you are seeing throughout the world, and it's a rather modern and very contemporary way of dealing with the world as it is right now.

MR. HORSMAN: Fernand wanted to get in, I think, here.

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Chairman. I totally agree with you that there are two trends across the world and with Lise as well. I object as well to the word "tribalism" though. I think that what has happened is that there has been greater integration and globalization of economic systems. And I think perhaps, that's one way -- there's one lesson that we can learn from that for the country. It's easier for people in New Brunswick to deal with the United States than it is to deal with Nova Scotia in terms of economics and business.

The non-tariff barriers that exist between governments in the Atlantic Provinces are absolutely terrible. As a matter of fact, Nova Scotia was the only province that did not sign the agreement to reduce non-tariff barriers across the country. But, you know, we try to integrate our economies, and we try to abolish tariff barriers, and there's a globalization of the economy.

On the other hand, I think that the counter-reaction to that is that the minorities, the minorities across the world -- Quebec is one in Canada -- although they accept that on the economic plain, are afraid of globalization from a cultural standpoint because one of the fundamental values of those societies and those minorities is to preserve their culture and all of what that entails.

So there must be some way that in this country we can integrate our economies, and we can have a flourishing economy while at the same time making sure that in doing that we don't destroy what are fundamental values for some of our people.

MR. HORSMAN: Thank you. I use the word "tribalism" because it gets people's attention. And obviously it does. Nationalism has been used so many times. But in any event, that's an interesting comment.

Interprovincial trade barriers are a huge issue facing Canada no matter what happens. And our view, our government that is, shares the views of New Brunswick that we must dismantle interprovincial trade barriers and barriers to economic union in Canada, quite frankly.

So I just, at the moment, but we're going to hear about what Albertans tell us. I don't want to preach too much about what we believe.

Dennis, you wanted to get in.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, your initiation on the discussion on the changes that the world is going through in terms of government forums everywhere, I think, is appropriate for us to take a look at. I, though, wanted to get back to a specific that Mr. Byfield had mentioned during his remarks in which, and he can correct me if I interpreted it wrong, he implied that should Quebec leave Canada that there would then be a potential for rearranging the country in a better way.

Would not the domination by one entity, Ontario, in this case, having the larger number of people, the great economic interest and the domination which, Mr. Byfield, you spoke to earlier in terms of Toronto, then fully dominate the parts of the country, and even with an initial arrangement which might be more favourable than it currently is in terms of a structure, would it be realistic to think that Alberta could realize its aspirations and needs and that other parts of the country, say the Atlantic Provinces, could do that in a nation with one entity that large and that powerful at its center?

MR. BYFIELD: Yes, I think for this reason that they used to say that Canada was a country consisting of ten disparate provinces held together by a mutual distrust and suspicion of Toronto. And I think that --

MR. HORSMAN: Is that me you're quoting, Ted?

MR. BYFIELD: It sounds a lot like -- I think that you'd have two circumstances, two probable circumstances.

First of all, there would be a degree of consternation in Toronto that you could not possibly imagine. Everything in the central part of that financial empire is predicated on the idea of sea-to-sea, on the idea of there being 3,815 branches of this bank, and all looking to the one city for their sort of prosperity and their outcome and everything else, and all of a sudden, boom, that's gone. The great chunk is out of the middle of it, and I think at that point you'd have something close to panic in Ontario.

Along comes the West and says, "Well, now, let's try and put it back together again, but we don't want to go the way of Quebec. We want to stay in, but we're going to stay in under these conditions." I rather

think Toronto would listen, however big it might be because it would be imbued with the imminent possibility of the total disintegration of the whole thing, the Atlantic Provinces going to the United States, the West establishing itself separately, which economically we always know we could do, and Ontario left with nothing at all. And I think at that point, Ontario will deal better than they certainly would have under the Meech Lake Agreement where the status quo would have been maintained, and we had no hope at all.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, if I could just challenge that a little.

MR. HORSMAN: Certainly.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Byfield seems to be indicating that economics would require that they deal, and yet if I was an Ontarian living on Bay Street in Toronto and wanting to maintain that, my first interests would be in trying to make sure that those economics transcended the new boundaries, whatever they were, being established.

Would that necessarily lead to the political union of the institutional restructuring, and if it did, would it be enough for places with as little population as Alberta or Prince Edward Island to be able to maintain its position as we move through a country that only has one entity of that size as opposed to two with different cultural interests as we have now?

MR. BYFIELD: No, I think that Ontario would be scared, and at that point Ontario would be prepared to look at changes which it, under the present circumstances and under the status quo, it wouldn't dream of looking at.

Second, just to deal with the question of what we would be putting forward in those circumstances which is the principle of provincial equality, I should make two points: Prince Edward Island, the same representation of Ontario. How ridiculous. Yet no more ridiculous than Rhode Island having the same representation as California and no more ridiculous really if you stop to think of it than what went on at the Meech Lake thing where Prince Edward Island very easily could have defeated Meech Lake. As it happened it was defeated in Manitoba.

So I think that at that point you're going to see Ontario very worried about its economics and very conscious of the fact that if it ignores political resistance -- as it did it I would say in the case of Quebec -- too long, it's going to lose everything that it's got. And that dependably, it will look after its economic interests first, and that will necessitate looking after the political concerns that people like the ones on this committee, I'm sure, are going to be advancing.

MR. ANDERSON: Can I just ask, Mr. Chairman, if Mr. Landry has a comment on that from a perspective of a smaller Eastern Province?

MR. LANDRY: Well, I think that to a certain extent Ted is assuming something here which I'm not sure that we can readily assume, and that is that Ontario would want to stay into an arrangement with Western Canada and Eastern Canada. I mean why would Ontario bother with the two million people or so -- and there are one and a half million people, two, three million people in Eastern Canada -- when it would have to go over to Quebec to get there. Why wouldn't a better deal with Ontario economically not be to simply enter into a relationship with Quebec. I mean it gives them as much of a margin, six million people right there next-door to them, and economically, I'm sure they could come to some arrangement.

MR. BYFIELD: Very possibly that's true, and of course so could the West, and that would certainly be one of the options. I think that, however, we have to be aware of the fact that Ontario is Toronto, and Toronto is very conscious of the fact that from a purely geographic and economic point of view, it has nothing going for it more than Detroit; Cincinnati; Akron, Ohio; and Buffalo, New York. It's just one more city in the general Great Lakes/Upper Ohio Valley region.

And if it loses Canada, it's going to become the same as a Detroit or a Cleveland or a Buffalo. It's hegemony over the country consists entirely upon presiding economically over this vast region. If the region breaks up, so will it. It will become one more Great Lakes city.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, Ted, you have the imperial model I guess, that Canada was in fact built upon. It was built upon the imperial model, the

central state, with --

MR. BYFIELD: Well, I don't think that's historically in dispute. I mean that's what happened.

MR. HORSMAN: No, the colonists and the emergence of the colonies to more maturity is --

MR. BYFIELD: That's what it comes to. The colonies are rebelling. There's a great unrest out here.

MR. HORSMAN: Fred Bradley?

MR. BRADLEY: Well, I had some earlier questions of Ms. Bissonnette, and I wonder if she might be able to respond to those.

MS. BISSONNETTE: Yes, well, there were two of them. I took notes. The first one, if I understood well, was that you were asking under what rules could Quebec go back to the negotiating table as we know it, as it is?

MR. BRADLEY: With the Federal Government and the provinces.

MS. BISSONNETTE: With the Federal Government and the provinces. Well, I don't see under what rules because I'm telling you that it is just a political reality unless maybe 20 or 25 years from now, one can never know, but in the foreseeable future I can't see how Quebec could do that because this is political suicide.

I mean if anyone, being the Premier of Quebec was to -- let's say that the Belanger-Campeau Commission comes up with a report that is reasonably agreed on, and then the Federal Government says, "Okay, we want to negotiate but proposes that this be the ordinary, traditional negotiating form just like the one that was before Meech, in this kind of formal process of amendment, then everybody would know in Quebec that this is doomed. That there's no way that all ten provinces of Canada will agree over three years to a set of proposals that would be probably -- if the Campeau-Belanger Commission comes up with the report that is "federalist" -- it would

be 28 demands or 30 instead of 5, so we would all know in Quebec that it is doomed, so there would be such skepticism, so I don't see how anyone could suggest to Quebecers right now that they could go back to this table. It's unthinkable in fact.

MR. BRADLEY: I guess what I'm saying is the first step we have to look at is devising a set of rules for a process which would bring all the governments of Canada together so they can decide on a reconstituted country or what form it might take. Are there rules or a process which you would envision that Quebec would participate in a new constitutional round of negotiation. This isn't the same as the previous one --

MS. BISSONNETTE: I mean another amending formula would have been --

MR. BRADLEY: -- the previous rules, a new framework for Canada to refederate itself under. Are there rules or a process that Quebec would agree to?

MR. BISSONNETTE: To tell you frankly, this has never been discussed, in fact, since the failure of Meech Lake, as a possibility. But the only thing I can think of is certainly that Quebec would never accept again to be ostriched to one or two or three provinces that would just say, "Okay, no," because this has been the process. That's what stung them in the Meech Lake process, but other than that, it's never been really discussed with them.

MR. BRADLEY: So if there was a new formula in terms of how we deal with constitutional issues, which obviously the amending formula would be part of that, there would have to be some different arrangement that people would get together and have to come to some agreement as to the ground rules before they're going to sit down and discuss the issues.

MS. BISSONNETTE: Yes, but then if we're getting into this, I mean formally that would mean that we go back to the 1981-'82 discussions about the amending formula for the Canadian Constitution and all of that, so we're sort of sitting --

MR. BRADLEY: That may have to be on the table in the future.

MS. BISSONNETTE: Yes. But I doubt very much that this is the kind of long process that Quebec would accept this time.

MR. BYFIELD: This is a very interesting exchange, Mr. Chairman. What Lise is telling us is that the basis upon which we negotiated in the past is gone, that Quebec will only now deal with the National Government because it is acting as a nation itself. And if the committee is calling her as a witness, I hope its report reflects that. There isn't any possibility of doing this again on the old basis. We are now in a completely new ball game.

MR. LANDRY: The other aspect of that, Mr. Chairman, is that I don't know how Quebec can credibly argue that it can negotiate with the Federal Government on a one-to-one basis when the majority of the caucus in the present government comes from Quebec. I mean it's negotiating with itself basically. You know, who is going to speak for the other provinces? Who is going to speak for New Brunswick?

I mean, if Quebec wants to negotiate with what it calls "English Canada", then it should be prepared to sit down on one side of the table with the other nine provinces on the other side of the table, not the Federal Government.

MS. BISSONNETTE: But I've never been saying that. That's an interpretation. Yes, it's true that it's being interpreted throughout Canada as Quebec saying, "Okay, we'll only negotiate with Ottawa." Well, we must make a difference there.

When that was said after the Meech failure, it was about administrative issues such as like the arrangement on immigration, some other negotiations that were then going on between Ottawa and Quebec, and some arrangements that under the present Constitution could be negotiated bilaterally between Ottawa and Quebec, but in terms of negotiating a new status for Quebec, that, of course, remains to be seen.

I think that's why I'm saying to all independentists in Quebec or people who are in favour of sovereignty association, that they don't take their wish for granted at the very beginning.

Because we have to understand that the present rules still stand, and we have to understand that Quebec will have to, you know, let's say that there's a referendum in three months from now, and that two-thirds of Quebecers say "Yes" to sovereignty, period. What do you do?

Well, if it's sovereignty, period, of course, you just take it, and you just go, so that's if you don't negotiate. You declare yourself independent, and then you go, and of course, there's no way of challenging it's the right to self-determination and all of that, but if you come with the proposal which is sovereignty association, then, you've got to find a way.

And I do agree that you just can't sit. Ottawa would not have the mandate, and then it's for the rest of Canada to see how they would deal with this, but then I think we would have to find different rules or to find some way of dealing with it. Or, in my view, but that's a journalist's view, and, again, I'm not advocating anything, but I think Quebec will have to become sovereign before it gets an association, and that's the logical way to go. And that's why it's going to take more time, and it's going to be more disruptive than many people think in Quebec right now.

So I think there's a lot of wishful thinking on both sides right now in thinking that this could -- I was discussing that briefly with Mr. Bercuson who was saying, "Well, we could have a peaceful divorce." So, so. I don't think that it's very possible.

MR. LANDRY: Can I just have one quick followup question. How would Quebec perceive a meeting of the nine other provinces sitting down together to develop a so-called English Canadian position? What would the impact of that be?

MS. BISSONNETTE: That would be interesting. In fact, I've been saying all long that I think at this point in time that the other provinces should develop a constitutional agenda on their own and stop obsessing about Quebec and see what they want, and they might realize at some point that the kind of Canada that they want is very much like the very decentralized -- I'm not talking about Ontario, of course. That's the problem -- but they might realize that they could very well want this kind of a very decentralized Canada that Quebec has been talking of all long.

But I would like to see develop in the rest of Canada a constitutional agenda of its own, I mean, and stop discussing what Quebec will do. I mean that's exactly what Quebec is doing right now. It's doing its own agenda, and then we'll see and we might have then some interesting meetings of minds, but I see that developing here a bit in the West. I'm not too sure about the Maritimes, but I was struck this week when I saw the Throne Speech in Ontario saying, well, you know, they were discussing everything on earth, and finally, the last paragraph just said, "Well, you know, this is a crucial issue. We'll see in the next five years."

God, this is quite unbelievable. It's just like you're in front of a house on fire, and you say, "Well, we'll see next week." That was about the -- I might be wrong. They might have some ace up their sleeve that they don't want to say about, but it's hard to tell.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, I don't think you'll find anybody here who's able to speak with clarity about what the present Ontario Government is likely to do.

Fred, do you want to follow up? And I know that Stan has a supplementary to ask.

MR. BRADLEY: Well, I just wanted to get into my second question.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, Stan has a supplementary, I think, which would follow logically on this line of discussion.

MR. SCHUMACHER: You gave us a very good overview of the Belanger-Campeau Commission, but I guess there's another commission also working in the Liberal Party which is going to be reporting before the Belanger-Campeau Commission, and I wonder if you could say if that will have any effect on things, and also, is it true that they are likely to recommend what you also saw happening, that is a unilateral declaration of independence followed by economic negotiations?

MS. BISSONNETTE: I think that the Liberal Party's own commission is going to come up probably with a vision that is very close to Mr. Bourassa's

own vision. I mean, his hold on the Party is such that it would be very surprising if they come up with something else.

You only have to read the young liberal's own report, and it's copied almost on Mr. Bourassa's speeches, and they're going to probably come up with the kind of, as I was saying, European model. That would be less radical maybe than the report of the Belanger-Campeau Commission which will have to take into account many other people including the radical independence people on the commission.

But all this to say that it's just political calculation, but then, you know, it's just journalist talk. But what we see is that Mr. Bourassa, when he gets those two reports -- one, his own party's report that will be, I think, it's scheduled for February and the other one in March, the Campeau-Belanger Commission report to the National Assembly -- and then Mr. Bourassa is free to do whatever he wants, and the final decision is to him. I think it was very astute, in fact.

He will get the two reports, and then he will, you know, go along with whatever he thinks, but he might be pushed further than he thought by the Belanger-Campeau Commission as we see it right now.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Could you say whether there's any group or any organization or anybody in Quebec who is advocating a restructured or renewed federalism?

MS. BISSONNETTE: Yes, there is, and that brings me to your question about economics. I think on the Campeau-Belanger Commission, the only orthodox federalist that I can think of, apart from Mr. Holden, who is the representative of the Equality Party but who is a minor player in there, would be Andre Ouellet who is the representative of Mr. Chretien and who is going back to all the arguments of 1980 about the goods and benefits from Confederation and all of this.

He is advocating a kind of renewed federalism, and it is what Mr. Chretien has been saying since Meech has failed and before that, but after. It is the kind of Canada restructured along regional lines, but we don't know exactly what it means.

I mean, do they stand for Triple E Senate, for example, along regional lines, but that's what he's been saying, but mostly this

is it. There's no one arguing really or daring to argue for the status quo or coming to the hearings except marginal groups and nothing else.

That brings me, yes, to the question about the debate on the economics and the emotion. I must say that the debate on the economics of separation or independence is a very lively one right now in front of Belanger-Campeau. In fact, this week it's been dominating the proceedings.

And what we see, again, is a very different picture from what we saw in 1980, and I would say that the debate is much less emotional now than it used to be. In 1980, you had a sort of separation between the people who were waving the flag and saying, "Well, we want to separate, and we want sovereignty for Quebec and all of that," and on the other side you had all the people who were in business and were saying, "No, no, no because this is dangerous."

Now, all of the lines have been blurred, and basically the artists, the intellectual community, the cultural community, they still stand on the "yes" side, but they're a bit, you know, far away from the debate, and the debate has moved inside the economic community, the business community, and all of that.

And what has changed, then, and you will understand quite quickly, is that the situation is not the same again. The federal deficit is such that the Federal Government cannot come about in Quebec and say, "Okay, we're going to shower on you so many things, and we're going to create this and that, and we've got all the money to do this," while they used to do that a lot in 1980. They used to promise the world to Quebec and they can't --

MR. BRADLEY: With their hands in our hip pocket.

MS. BISSONNETTE: Exactly. But they can't do that anymore. The Federal Government has been so weakened by this question of the deficit that they just don't look as strong, in terms of the economy, as they used to be. The other thing is that there is the usual classical debate about what's Confederation bringing to you as an individual in terms of transfer payments and things like that, so you get into -- I'm not an economist -- but it was very interesting to see that the "conseil du patronat" is as close as you can get to orthodox federalism in the business community right now. It's the employer's

association.

I heard a very well known economist, Andre Venieux (phonetic), and asked him to go back to his calculating tables and just, you know, show what Confederation was bringing to the Quebec people, and he came out with very interesting results showing that Confederation was still good for the people, but what it showed was that it's bringing to all of us individually the equivalent of $217 more a year than it would do without, so I mean this is getting to be a kind of argument that is totally irrelevant. I mean $200 more or less -- you can argue forever -- is it worth it?

So these kind of discussions, that are in my view absolutely irrelevant as long as they're as technical, are not interesting. What is interesting is what would be the transitional cost, and that's the real question right now in Quebec. What would be the cost of transition? That's what the three Quebec economists that I was talking about were discussing three days ago.

Some say, "Well, there will be ten years of turmoil. Better think before you get into that," and some others say, "Well, no, because, you know, people will come to realize that it's in the interests of everybody that we do agree on some kind of association, and then things will settle quite quickly." So the question is not whether Quebec can make it on its own, but what will be the cost of changing so much the present structure.

MR. BRADLEY: Well, thank you. The perception in Western Canada, I think it would be fair to say, that people who were against Meech Lake and said, "It's fine for Quebec to go" looked at it in the viewpoint that Quebec would go as an independent country and responsible for its own economy and separated from the benefits of the Canadian economic union. And when faced with that, Quebec would not leave because they would not want to destroy the Canadian economic union.

I think most of the independent movement in Quebec is still based on continuing the Canadian economic union whereas I think Western Canadians' view of Quebec going on alone said, "Well, all the benefits, the trade, everything stops, and Quebec is an independent country," and that's not part of the ball game as far as a view in Western Canada looks at it.

MR. BYFIELD: Could I ask, Mr. Chairman, whether I understood Lise correctly? I used to be on the CBC with her, and we often didn't understand each other. Is she saying that back in 1980 the federalists in Quebec could raise a strong argument? They could say, "Look at all the money that's there in Ottawa. If we cut off Canada, we won't get that money." But now they are saying, "There ain't no money left in Ottawa, so there's no reason to continue the association."

You're not saying this, are you?

MS. BISSONNETTE: No, no, no. But I'm saying that it's very difficult for them, for federalists, right now to raise the argument of Ottawa bringing all those benefits to Quebec because nobody believes them anymore.

MR. BYFIELD: That's just what I said, Lise.

MR. BISSONNETTE: No, no. I'm not saying that they themselves are saying, "Okay, we're broke." They're not telling that, but, in fact, we know that they are.

MR. BYFIELD: Oh, they're just not saying. That's all the difference.

MR. BISSONNETTE: No, no, no. They're not saying it.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, in fairness to our audience who have submitted a number of provocative questions, I think perhaps I should get to some of those now in the remaining half hour. Many of them are, in fact, addressed to Ms. Bissonnette, and some of them will fit together.

The first one from Mr. Lee is, "Could you give us a definition of sovereignty association? What do Quebec people understand by it?" To followup, a somewhat similar question.

"If Quebec were to opt for a form of sovereignty association, what would be the territorial boundaries for that state?" As a supplement, "If Quebec has the right to opt for sovereignty association or some kind of independence, do not the native people in the north or English on the West Island of Montreal have the same right to not be part of the sovereign

Quebec?"

And there's another question addressed to Mr. Byfield, but I think it perhaps relates to the same question of boundaries. "If Quebec separates as an independent country, should it have the same boundaries as present, or should it revert to the size it was in 1867?"

So I think perhaps those questions tie in somewhat together.

MS. BISSONNETTE: Well, you know, these are, in fact, quite theoretical questions nevertheless, but I would say one thing. The definition of "sovereignty association" is quite -- I mean if Rene Levesque was there, he would say it better than I would do. In fact, it is a sovereign nation. That means a state controlling all its Legislation, making all its own Legislations, controlling all its main institutions, and getting into some kind of economic association with the others, so that means, yes, and that some people in Quebec tend to forget it, that there's no Federal Parliament anymore, and that you only have common institutions, and this is it.

Well, some people will argue that in Europe they are moving towards a federal supernational parliament, but if you look at really the powers of that parliament as it is right now, they're very, very small.

But basically, this is it. This is the sovereign nation. The problem right now is that the lines, again, are getting blurred. There's a lot of talk in Quebec, former federalists who are moving toward more of a sovereigntist position who are saying, and Mr. Belanger himself tried that line at the very beginning that renewed federalism and sovereignty association were the same things.

I don't agree with that, and I think that Jacques Parizeau was right in being angry at him for saying that. Because, of course, renewed federalism is renewed federalism. You've got a federal parliament, a federal country, and then there's only a very small amount of sovereignty that a province can have, but basically, it is a sovereign state that gets into some kind of common institutions, be it the Bank of Canada, the monetary union, and customers union, and things like that.

So, just go back to what Rene Levesque was saying. As far as the question of territorial boundaries, I've seen that. I've seen a number of letters in the Globe And Mail and elsewhere, people saying,

"Well, you know, Quebec should be reduced to its 1867." All this is a matter of negotiation. I would like to get back Labrador personally but, you know. Well, you know, this is a question in Quebec also that maybe Labrador was wrongly given to Newfoundland, and things like that, but these questions seem to me to be -- once Quebec decides that by a referendum or something like that, and we're getting far into scenarios and fiction, you know, that it's going to want full sovereignty, for example, yes, you have to discuss what are the boundaries of that and what it should be, and it's going to be a tough discussion.

Again, I think that people have a simplistic view about this. I think that Quebec will go the sovereign way one way or the other, but we've got to know that this won't be easy. So, yes, there will be a discussion about boundaries, and there will be a discussion about the self-determination of native people and Anglos and the West Island though I doubt that they will separate, and the native question is more serious in my view.

I don't think that the Anglophone population in the West Island -- and what is the West Island? In fact, it's getting to be very diverse these days, what we call the West Island. I mean the west part, the Western part of Montreal. And, then, it would be difficult to argue what is the right of self-determination of a people that are scattered throughout the city.

But the natives, in my view, have more of a claim in fact because of the fact that they've been living in that territory for long and also that they have territories that are quite defined. But what kind of self-determination do they want, and what do they want in terms of sovereignty? We discussed that all over the summer, and I thought this was a very fascinating discussion in my view because the kind of sovereignty that they're talking about is not exactly the kind of sovereignty that we are talking about in Quebec, so I guess we would have to come to an agreement with them in some way or another, and I don't see any kind of catastrophic scenario where you have, you know, countries like Liechtenstein and Monaco and then Quebec and things like that. People are more intelligent than that I think.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, thank you. This one perhaps should be addressed to -- it's very provoking.

"If Canada is in general unable to deal fairly and justly with the minorities amongst our majorities, vis-a-vis natives,

Francophones, minority provinces, women's rights, and one process of constitutional change, can we hope to remain a Confederation which is nothing if it is not a collective attempt to deal with minorities within a larger majority?"

Ted, that sounds like one that you should be able to answer.

MR. BYFIELD: I'd first of all have to have it repeated because I didn't understand it.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, all right. "If Canada is in general unable to deal fairly and justly with the minorities amongst our majorities, vis-a-vis natives, Francophones, minority provinces, women's rights, and one process of constitutional change, can we hope to remain a Confederation which is nothing if it is not a collective attempt to deal with minorities within a larger majority?"

MR. BYFIELD: I have problems with the question. First of all, women are not a minority. I think there is more of them than there are of us. Is that not true? I thought it was 50.2 percent.

MR. HORSMAN: Yes, I think that's fair. There are more women in Canada than there are men. Certainly in my household with three daughters, there are.

MR. BYFIELD: We are split of what remains in our household 50/50, which means that it's a woman's household. My wife runs it.

And I have difficulty with the second part "which is nothing if it is not a collective attempt to deal with the minorities within the larger majority." This is to say that a nation consists entirely of a collective attempt to deal with its minority. I think there's far more to a nation than a collective attempt to deal with its minorities. Dealing with its minorities is one of the things it has to do. Figuring out how its people are going to eat is another thing that it has to do. I mean there's all kinds of it. So I don't understand the question.

And now, at the same time, just to make some general observation about this and the whole subject of dealing with minorities. We have to, in the rest of the country, put together some kind of a just system.

There's no question about this. And minority provinces -- and certainly there's things missing in the law that women deserve. There's not as much as there used to be, but there are still some things there. No question. But we should try to have a just society in what's left. If that's the question, the answer is, yes, we should try to do that.

I think relating it back to what was just said here though, it has to do with the purposes of this committee, and it's this. Is this committee going to say, "Here's the way we think we can keep Quebec in Canada," when Lise has just finished telling us there's practically nothing this committee can do that will keep Quebec in Canada. Or is it going to say, "We assume that the probability is Quebec is going to leave Canada. Here's what we think ought to be done by the rest of the country."

This committee is going to have to make that decision, and if it comes up on the first premise, we think we can hold the old show together, it is going to be totally ignoring what the editor of Le Devoir has told us. If it comes up on the second one, it shows it's got some guts. I'm kind of betting on you guys to take the second course.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, we're going to hear what Albertans have to say on that subject, and that's why we're in this process. We're trying to stimulate people's thinking on those very lines, and that's why we appreciate the frankness of Ms. Bissonnette and also watching what is being said in Quebec with their commission there.

Anyway I've got some more questions. "It is trite and advances nothing to say that Quebec is different. It is different as all will admit. The question is, what additional powers should it have because it is distinct, and should its distinctiveness entitle Quebec to have power to override the Charter?" I think that override, the notwithstanding clause issue is inherent in that, so maybe you could tackle that.

MS. BISSONNETTE: The question of the notwithstanding clause?

MR. HORSMAN: Yes.

MS. BISSONNETTE: Well, first of all, one must set the record straight. Quebec was not the only province to use the overriding clause. I mean other

provinces have done it. Maybe it was less debated and less discussed throughout the country than what Quebec did, but that's the difference.

The other point also in all this notwithstanding clause debate, and I wouldn't like to go for it because we would still be sitting here all afternoon, but there is this basic assumption in Quebec that the way it was used it was only for commercial signs and for nothing else, and that's the basic discussion that has to do with jurisprudence, and what do you think of -- what is really the notion of freedom of expression.

Well, there is this basic assumption in Quebec that freedom of expression, as it is today and as the jurisprudence stands, is not including commercial signs and, then, with respect to the Supreme Court judges who think otherwise.

So you can argue with that. I've argued with lawyers. I've argued with other people. I've argued, of course, with people from the Anglophone community in Quebec, but you can go for hours and hours discussing that because this a matter of belief, in fact, and of your own interpretation of what freedom of expression is, so you can -- you know, I don't think that Quebec will back down from keeping the notwithstanding clause in the Constitution because right now it is the only protection that Quebec has in terms of the distinct society, but I doubt very much that it will be used very often.

At this time, it was in my view a technical question which was the one of commercial signs and it was made into a very big issue, but one could argue also that it was used in other provinces, and if people had cared to debate it, they might have got into the same kind of argument that we got into in Quebec over what is a basic freedom or not. So that was one thing.

What was the beginning of the question because I had something to say about it?

MR. HORSMAN: "What additional powers should Quebec have because it is distinct?"

MS. BISSONNETTE: The problem with this distinct society notion is that you can say that you want all the powers because it's not limited to language and culture. We were talking just a minute ago about the national

role for the Federal Government in education, for example, and people see this in the economic terms. Well, we need so many doctors and lawyers and engineers and all that. Why is it that we wouldn't accept a federal role into that?

Well, you know, you might look at the Quebec system and see that the educational system is different, that you don't want the Federal Government setting the norm for that, and you can see also that the Federal Government has tried to sort of change the priorities, for example, in terms of the type of engineers that Canada should have and things like that, and that they don't fit with Quebec priorities and then you say, "Okay, we don't agree with that, and this is the power that Quebec should have. It should have total full control of its manpower and training and development, and the Federal Government shouldn't have any say in that because the Quebec system of education is totally different."

And then you move into transportation, and you find something else, and you say the Quebec institutions are different, and then you move into banking, and you find that the Quebec institutions, of course, think of the caisse populaire and the movement des jardins as different, and then it's a question of basically not of language and culture so much as of a different history, different institutions, that you want to keep, and you don't want to have the majority dictate to you what should your institutions be.

So it's a very large notion, the notion of a distinct society. And I did agree during the debate on Meech that it meant a lot if it were to be accepted. I wanted it to be more defined, and that's something else.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, I have a four-part question for you, and I think it reflects some perceptions which you would find widely held in Western Canada. "How many Albertans have been invited to present at the Quebec hearings? I'll give you the second one. "Your license plates say, "We remember", "Je me souviens." What is it you remember?" Three, "Why is bilingualism rejected in Quebec?" And four, "We know you are different, but what makes you distinct, that is to say, superior?"

MS. BISSONNETTE: Well, I mean these are questions that we get all the time, so let's first deal, and they're easy to answer in a way because, you know, we are used to dealing with them.

The Quebec hearings were deliberately put together so as for Quebecers to discuss among themselves after being three years of discussing with the rest of Canada and getting into these unending discussions about what is a distinct society and what should be the future of Canada.

And the Meech Lake Accord was enough. There was an overdose of sort of battling with part of the rest of the country. I shouldn't say so because a lot of people were supporting Meech in Canada, so it was deliberately put together so that Quebecers would talk to Quebecers about their own future, and if you remember what Mr. Bourassa said on the day of the failure of Meech, that's exactly what he said. "And now we've got to speak among ourselves and decide," and that's why it was put this way. There will be other hearings, I'm sure, once the Belanger-Campeau Commission process is over when we will get back into a discussion with the rest of Canada, but this was really the purpose of that commission was for Quebecers to sit together and to decide, now that Meech is over and now that this constitutional reform process has failed, what do we want? And you hear very often that Quebecers know what they want. It's true on general terms but it's not true on specifics, and that's what they're doing. The license plate --

MR. HORSMAN: Let me just interject. It's worth noting that when Manitoba held its hearings on Meech Lake, they made it perfectly clear that they did not wish to have any representation of anyone outside of Manitoba, so it's not just Quebec that has taken the approach that they want to hear only the people from within their own province.

MS. BISSONNETTE: But the time seemed to be that it was a time to do that, and then after that, you'll get into another kind of negotiation, I don't know what forum, but this was really the feeling that that's what Quebecers should do at this point was to decide among themselves what they wanted, so that's it.

So the license plate, "we remember", I think it's, you know, when you are a minority like Quebec with such a sense of history. I do agree with some people who say that we want to erase the conquest, and I'm not ashamed of that. I mean you're in the face of a people which has a strong sense of history.

I would think today they have a strong sense of the future also, but the sense of history is what kept us alive, and we wouldn't be here today if we didn't have a sense of history in Quebec, so it might be a little passe to have that on license plates, but I mean try to change the motto on license plates and get into that kind of discussion in any place, and you will see that it's not worth it. So it's there, but nobody thinks about it anymore, but I think that when it was put there at the time it was the sense of history. That's all there is to it, and I must say that nobody notices it anymore very much in Quebec.

Why is bilingualism rejected in Quebec? Well, in all respect, I will tell you this. There's not one province in Canada that is more bilingual than Quebec, and you have to accept that. In practice, there is only one place in Canada that is truly bilingual, and it is Montreal, and it is a city that is so bilingual that you're sitting beside people, and they're going from French to English as I was doing last week. It's unbelieveably bilingual, Montreal, to the point where you wonder what kind of language is going to emerge from that. The rest of the province is also. So if you care about the facts and not only about the theory of Canada, you have to admit that. Ottawa is an artificially bilingual city because it was forced into being bilingual while Quebec is, as a province, more bilingual than anything else.

That it be officially unilingual, that's something else, but in terms of what people are -- and I'm a good example of that though my English might not be perfect. I mean, I wouldn't survive without it, and so do most people who have any kind of a significant interest in life today in Quebec. They wouldn't survive without it, so if you look at the facts and at the province, you cannot say in fairness that bilingualism is rejected in Quebec.

"Distinct" meaning "superior". That's the Margaret Atwood theory, and that's coming up again. She came to Quebec with this last summer, saying that in English "distinct" means "superior", and so that's why distinctiveness was rejected in the rest of Canada. I doubt that it was true. At least in French that's not what it means. "Distinct" means simply "different", and so there might have been a little question of misunderstanding of vocabulary here, but I doubt that this was really very important in the discussion that we have. I can assure you that in French it doesn't mean "superior".

MR. HORSMAN: Well, we've been working you very hard. I'm going to switch the questions to Mr. Landry for the moment.

First of all, I have an interesting one which we'll try to respond. The gentleman who asked it wrote a lengthy question. He's a proponent of Esperanto and suggests that we can bring about a new kind of bilingualism where French and Esperanto are official languages of Quebec, and English and Esperanto are official languages in English-speaking Canada, and therefore we have a neutral language which would join us together.

Now, are you prepared at all to comment on that proposal?

MR. LANDRY: Well, certainly if it was a practical proposal I would see no problems with it, except that I don't think that it's achievable over the next couple of centuries. We have enough problems with two languages, let alone having a third, but, you know, I have no problems with that. I suppose it would probably be as easy to try to get everybody to be bilingual in the country so that people could understand each other well, to speak their own language and be understood by the other side.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, this is a question addressed to both you and Ms. Bissonnette.

"Are you satisfied with the present means of amending the Constitution? I take it from your comments that unanimity is not the solution and is, in fact, a hindrance to nation-building."

MR. LANDRY: I think in practice unanimity is a real problem, and it's a real problem because, and as we saw going through the Meech process, there's always somebody who has an election coming up and, you know, within the next six months there's always somebody who has an election coming up and in those circumstances, and I've lived with politicians long enough to know that politics become a little bit more important.

And that's what happened with Meech to a certain extent. I mean all the provinces and the Federal Government agreed to put it through, and there were three elections. Ours was the first, and we took positions, which we believed in, that were different than the Federal Government, and we took those positions during the election campaign. It was

part of our mandate, and we kept those positions.

So, you know, unanimity has that flaw in it. On the other hand, of course, "unanimity" means "equality" as well. It means that every province has the same right to influence the constitutional amendment process, but I'm not sure that unanimity is the practical way of amending the Constitution.

MR. BYFIELD: Mr. Chairman, it's true, and should be pointed out as you'll know, Jim, that we can get the Triple E Senate on the basis of 7 provinces having 50 percent of the population. Whether that would be mean that the West and three Maritime Provinces could do it, probably not, I don't know. But we do not have the principle of unanimity in the present Constitution; is that not correct?

MR. HORSMAN: Well, there are certain things which require unanimity of the provinces and the Federal Government. Those are matters which impact upon the Monarchy, the offices of the Governor General, the Lieutenant Governor, and the key thing is unanimity is required to amend the process of the amending formula.

MR. BYFIELD: Of the amending formula, yes.

MR. HORSMAN: Not, however, to change the Senate. It's rather interesting the other day -- and I'll just add this quickly -- a commentator said that the -- as a matter of fact, the author of the book you referred to in such glowing terms -- Senate could block an amendment to the Senate itself. It cannot. It can only delay by 180 days. So there's a lack of understanding about the nature of the amending formula. 7 of the 10 provinces with at least 50 percent of the population.

Now, that means you must get either Quebec or Ontario.

MR. BYFIELD: Unless Quebec leaves.

MR. HORSMAN: And then you have to get Ontario.

MR. BYFIELD: You still need Ontario. I've never done the arithmetic. Have you? I don't know.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, Ontario has 49 percent of the population, we believe, in that neighborhood, of Canada without Quebec.

MR. BYFIELD: Not quite enough.

MR. HORSMAN: Not quite enough. But the numbers game is very interesting in any event. But, you know, I think people have to understand the amending formula. There are only a very limited number of things which require unanimity.

MR. LANDRY: But as long as you have a package, though, that includes some of the elements that require unanimity, you're stuck.

MR. HORSMAN: Yes, that's right.

MR. LANDRY: And as long as the rule is that you have to accept the whole package or reject the whole package.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, you know, the other interesting thing is that we devised the amending formula prior to 1982 and we've only used it once, and that was with respect to the first amendment to the Canadian Constitution with respect to a process for discussing Aboriginal rights which, of course, went out in '87, so in any event we haven't had any experience other than Meech Lake and, obviously, we're going to have to find a new process.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, could I interject? Ms. Bissonnette has been faithful to really answer directly all the questions put to her, and it's been enlightening for us, but the one I don't think she fully comprehended, if we can just get back to it for a second, was the question, and I'm presuming to interpret here, on bilingualism, and why doesn't Quebec embrace it, and I don't think it was intended to mean the geographical reality or the demographics in Quebec that a lot of people speak both languages, but the fact that the government in Quebec invoked the notwithstanding clause to, in a very legal

way and a very official way, say, "No English will be permitted on signs on stores."

And, Lise, you need to understand that that one issue was the catalyst. Certainly in Alberta, Meech Lake for many months lay as a sleeping dog. No reference, Mr. Chairman, to the nature of Meech Lake. It was asleep up to that point, and at that point the sensibilities of Albertans were jarred awake, and they said in Alberta, when I phoned the rural detachment, the gruff staff sergeant must say, "Hello", "Bonjour", and that's the extent of his language, but he has to say that.

Whereas Quebec, in a very official way, says, we will not allow English on signs, therefore I think the question was saying, why does Quebec not embrace bilingualism that way when in Alberta we have to.

MS. BISSONNETTE: I mean in terms of official bilingualism, that's what's been the question all the time. I'm always a bit surprised at being asked that because most provinces except New Brunswick don't have even a language law of their own, and if there were to be a debate in many provinces about what should be the official language of government, any kind of provincial government, except again New Brunswick, were to discuss what is the official language in this province, I doubt very much that they would come to another solution than the Quebec Government solution which is to say we are officially unilingual.

MR. DAY: We're talking about the commercial sense here.

MS. BISSONNETTE: If we're talking just about commercial signs, then we would have to go into a kind of historic interpretation of that. We go back to, let's say, 1977 and the first language law that -- no, it was in 1974. Bill 22 didn't contain a proposal on the language of commercial signs, and it wasn't a big issue at the time, and it was really not a big issue.

I remember quite well because all the discussion was about the language of schooling, and why should we not admit the freedom of choice, and people had to be apprised of the fact that Montreal schools were rapidly become mostly English-speaking. At the time we were close to 50 percent of the students were in English schools in Montreal because of the influx of immigrants, of course, who were choosing English, and so this

was a dangerous situation culturally and all of that.

So most of the debate in 1974 was about the language of schooling, so anybody who thought very much about the commercial signs, and even the Parti Quebecois at the time didn't make a big fuss about it, but then '76 happened and then '77 when they amended Bill 22 and changed it to Bill 101. This began part of the discussion, and it wasn't a very big point at the time. I think even the Anglophones in Quebec didn't sort of make a big fuss about it again.

And it's only years later as Bill 101 was challenged in front of the courts that suddenly, you know, it was stricken down. Every part of it at some point just fell down in the Supreme Court. And the people in Quebec began to feel besieged really that Bill 101 didn't mean anything.

As soon as you wanted to do something for language in Quebec, some Supreme Court Judge would come, and say, "Okay, well, you can't do it," and in the end, there was left the issue of commercial signs, and it became a big, big, big issue.

Suddenly everybody was fighting about commercial signs. Well, I mean who cares, you know, if you go to the cleaner, and it says "cleaner" instead of "nettoiyeur" and things like that, but on both sides it became such a big issue, it was awful.

And Mr. Bourassa, I think he made the mistake in 1985. He could have settled it as he was elected and say, "Okay, we are accepting that signs could be bilingual. At that time he could have. In '88, what was it, in '89 when the Supreme Court Justice came down, it was impossible.

So it's a question of political process more than anything else. And we are of the view today, a lot of my friends and other analysts, are of the view that in a sovereign Quebec, it would be easier to deal with that issue than it is today because it was so charged. It was the last bastion. It was lasting, and then on both sides, it became so big. You had to fight and you had to win.

And, of course, then this discussion which was quite, in fact, nothing that big if you come to think of it, it sort of expanded into the rest of Canada. It became, yes, an interpretation that Quebec was rejecting bilingualism. You know, you have to sort of avoid simplistic

explanations of that, but that's the best I can give you, and it's an historic one. I think it has to be explained by the way the whole business of Bill 101 and the trials and all of this came about, and this was the last frontier, let's say.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, I think in fairness, a lot of Albertans don't seem to recognize or have forgotten that when I was Attorney General, I brought in a Bill entitled "The Alberta Languages Act" which made Alberta officially unilingual English relative to the laws of Alberta and proceedings in our legislature.

And when that Act was before our Assembly, Premier Bourassa came to Edmonton, and he was accosted by Alberta Francophones and challenged to defend their cause. And he said, "No. That is the responsibility of the Legislature of the Province of Alberta. It is not my business."

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, the difference I'm trying to point out, nothing in our language law prohibits a French person advertising in French. That's the difference.

MR. HORSMAN: That's correct, that's correct, and we do not prohibit the use of French in the Legislature.

MR. DAY: Right.

MR. HORSMAN: And another interesting fact is that the Constitution of Canada requires bilingualism in the Quebec National Assembly.

MS. BISSONNETTE: Well, of course.

MR. HORSMAN: Requires it.

MS. BISSONNETTE: That's what the first version of Bill 101 tried to strike down, and then finally the Supreme Court --

MR. LANDRY:

The discussion between Lise and Mr. Day is so instructive of the two solitudes that we have in this country.

When Alberta did what it did, the perception in Quebec was the Francophones in Alberta have had rights ever since Alberta joined Confederation. They were constitutional rights. They were never respected, but they were constitutional rights. The racists in Alberta took away those rights. That was the perception in Quebec.

When Quebec did what it did, the people in Alberta and New Brunswick and everywhere across the country said, "The Anglophones have had rights in the Constitution in Quebec for 100 years, and now the racist government in Quebec is taking away those rights."

And that's the way it's portrayed by the press in Quebec when Alberta does what it did, and that's the way it's portrayed by the press in Alberta when Quebec did what it did. Finally, nobody was racist. People were addressing practical problems. But you must understand I read and listen to the French and English press everyday, and it's frustrating to no end, when you're a Canadian and you want to keep this country together, to see that two perceptions are being conveyed.

And, Lise, I don't want to take on the press here. I've taken on enough people. But the fact is that, you know, what the population see and the perceptions created are those perceptions.

MS. BISSONNETTE: Yes, Le Devoir is different, so I don't --

MR. HORSMAN: Well, I have a couple of quick questions. We've passed our time for conclusion, but I'll quickly run these past you. And I just want a "Yes" or "No" answer. This is addressed to both Mr. Byfield and Ms. Bissonnette.

"Paranoid conspiracy theories aside, what is the chance that machinery is in motion right now to effect the independent state that Quebec seeks, and all discussions, et cetera, are in fact redundant? Is Quebec determined to do so already, and it's just milking the situation until the machinery can make the switch as painlessly as possible for Quebec?"

Yes or no? Is such a secret thing in place and if it is, I'd like to know so we can conclude our hearings very quickly.

MR. BYFIELD: It's in place, and it's not secret. It appears everyday in the Globe And Mail. You can see what Quebec is doing. They're not making any secret of it. They say they're going to have a referendum. In all likelihood they're going to vote to get out, and that's it. What's secret?

MS. BISSONNETTE: There's no scenario to speak of. I mean if we knew the exact scenario that is going to unfold, of course, there would be no point in even having hearings in Quebec and the whole discussion. As I said at the very beginning, the overall objective is clear, the strategy isn't, and all the discussions rights now are on the strategy, and there's no master plan and there's nothing like that. In fact, people are obsessed about strategy right now in Quebec.

But I would simply say that, yes, the dynamics of the situation right now in Quebec are surely in pushing Quebec out. In what way, shape, or form, I can't tell you today, but there's no denying that, and people who say that this can be reversed, well, I wish them good luck or they have to have good arguments.

It's not a matter of a saviour or a Messiah or someone that's going to come out of a hat and suddenly change this. I think there is a lot of wishful thinking going on in the rest of Canada right now, and there shouldn't be, so that's why forums like this are so useful.

MR. HORSMAN: Thank you. Well, I'm going to read a couple of items here without comment perhaps from anyone.

"The point of my first question" -- this is from Bert Brown -- "without a great generosity of spirit, the majority will always win over the minority. Thus our Confederation becomes a list of major losers. Natives lose to the rest of Canada, minority provinces lose to Ontario and Quebec. Finally, Quebec's language and culture inevitably loses to the majority." And that key word is without a "great generosity of spirit". Very good comment.

"I think Switzerland probably has the most successful Federal System in the world today. They have 23 canons of widely varied population with three main language groups. They have a highly decentralized government which is held in check through referendums, recalls, and citizens initiatives, and a real Triple E Senate. Switzerland probably has

the most stable and prosperous society in the world. Why don't we seriously study their model?"

MR. HORSMAN: We are. That was one of the items presented to the committee by Ron Watts, a good overview of federal states in the world. And it's part of the record, and we are indeed studying other federal systems.

Finally, this. "It is with a great deal of respect I note that the various presenters your Task Force has heard are all representative of particular interest groups, and it is also with respect that I note the presenters, members of the Task Force, and members of the audience, are for the large part over the age of 35. Many are, in fact, over 50 and close to 65!"

"With all due respect, I'm concerned that the very generation that you are defining the country for, and the very generation that will be left to govern under the rules you lay down is not represented. My question is, how does an ordinary young Canadian, who is not a lawyer, a professor, or a publisher speak to your commission? As a graduate student of political science, and more importantly as a concerned young Canadian, I too have views on this pertinent issue. The question is how can I exp..s them?"

Well, I'm going to tell you how. At the end of our proceedings next week, and I remind you and the viewers who have faithfully sat through the three and a half hours of this presentation, that the fourth roundtable will take place, I believe, at 1:30 p.m. in Room 512 of the Alberta Legislature, and my colleague and Vice-Chairman will chair the particular function since I'm off to Brussels to talk about GATT, which we could also talk about all day, and hopefully, it will not fail, but it does not look very good. That's an aside.

We will there hear from additional presenters who will be talking about the economics of federalism, and we shall be talking about the constitutional amendment process, and at that time, the Task Force will hear more particularly on the issue we've just touched on just a few moments ago in the course of our question period.

When we have completed that process, the ten members of our panel and the officials of my department, Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, will prepare a discussion paper for Albertans. We intend to circulate that very widely to Albertans, and then we will engage in a discussion with Albertans, and it will include a questionnaire which will go to

Albertans' homes.

And we would hope that Albertans will respond, and they will discuss it amongst the members of their household. And the questionnaire is not going to be easy to design. It's like designing a question on the referendum. That's not easy to do, I can tell you. Quebec experienced that, I know, in the referendum debate of 1980.

But, in any event, we'll do our very best to put the questions as succinctly as possible to Albertans about what Albertans want our government to do when the time comes, as it will, to sit down with the provinces and the Federal Government so that we have a clear constitutional position as expressed to us by Albertans. That questionnaire will be part of the consultative process.

We will also engage in extensive hearings in universities, colleges, and smaller centers throughout Alberta, and at that time, we will invite Albertans with views to come forward and give us those views whether or not you're a lawyer, whatever. We are wanting the broadest possible advice given to this Task Force.

And then, we will prepare a position paper to take to our Legislative Assembly, where it will be debated in full by all political parties, and the Public Affairs Committee will no doubt hold public hearings at which time people can express their views again as to what our defined position will be at that stage.

And that's the process that we've settled upon within Alberta. We also intend, I think it's very clear, to try to have dialogue with the other provinces, whatever process the New Brunswick Government has established, the process the Federal Government has done, and we intend to discuss that.

But at this stage, I think it is fair to say that we can hold to the view that we are Canadians, that this country is a remarkable experiment in nationhood and that we will do what we can to effect a relationship, however changed it may be, in terms of our constitutional structure, with the other people who live in Canada as we know it today.

What that will be, I can't tell you today because I'm not coming to this table with awfully fixed views. We have to be flexible to represent the interests and the views of Albertans. That is not going to be easy because Albertans don't see everything precisely the same. I think that's

clear. My wife and I don't agree on everything. But let's try working together to devise a system by which we can continue our relationship with the people in this northern half of the North American Hemisphere, and we've got our work cut out for us.

Thank you all for attending. It's been a pleasure.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:50 p.m.)